

Femme Fatales

May 15

\$5.95

SHAUNA O'BRIEN
VENESSA BLAIR

ERIKY BARTLETT
KATHERINE TOWNE
LORI HEURING
KIM MURPHY
"IN CROWD"

REBECCA GRANT
"THROAT & NECK"

Shauna O'Brien,
Surrender Cinema's
sexy swashbuckler

Zorrita

THE SIRENS OF
SURRENDER CINEMA
KARA STYLER
BRANDY DAVIS

Volume 8 Number 16



HEAVY METAL 2000

THE SOUNDTRACK HEAVY METAL 2000

Featuring Tracks From

**Mooster Megnet • Penture
• Boys Of The New •
Jocann Glawe Passe
with Twiztid • System Of
A Down • Cool Chembar •
Mechlee Reed • Queens Of
The Stone Age • Billy Idol
• Benkees • MAFK •
Paye • Sinsstar • Note
Dept • Full Devil Jacket •
Apartment 26 • Zilch**

COMING SOON!

Featuring
**JULIE
STRAIN**

Restless

www.heavy-metal.com

www.heavy-metal.net

Heavy Metal, Quarter Horse and Death Mountain are trademarks of Heavy Metal. All rights reserved.

BMG

REPRODUCTION

Unauthorized reproduction

is prohibited.

READY TO RUMBLE

ROSE MCGOWAN & THE NITRO GIRLS MEET THE WRESTLERS.

BY FREDERICK C. SZEBIN

The Nitro Girls, who've turned WCW NITRO into a ratings blockbuster for TBS, are following the suit of another trendy all-female ensemble, The Spice Girls: yep, they've made a movie. But will **READY TO RUMBLE** prove more profitable than **SPICE WORLD**, which tallied underwhelming box-office business?

The ladies are abetted by Rose McGowan, whose appearance with Marilyn Manson at the MTV Music Awards—she was wearing little more than an apple-cheek expression—left more of an indelible impression than her latest movies (anyone remember **THE DEVIL IN THE FLESH** or **JAWBREAKER**? Me neither). McGowan's comely character shares a mutual affection for wrestling pageantry with Scott Caan and fellow **SCREAMER** David Arquette. But the trio is emotionally body slammed when their hero, champion wrestler Jimmy King (Oliver Platt), loses his crown to an unscrupulous match promoter. Naturally, the boys vow that their idol will make a comeback (the plot turns into a hybrid of **ALL THE MARBLES** and **ABBOTT AND COSTELLO IN THE FOREIGN LEGION**).

Enter the Nitro Girls: Spice, Storm, A.C., Tygress, Chase, Jazz, Fyre and former Playboy model Kimberly Page. The repertory was initially organized to dance during commercial breaks, but their celebrity eclipsed the ring's unbridled testosterone. Wielding a flair for fighting and backstabbing, the femmes were eventually integrated into the action.

McGowan's career professionally counters the flash of the Nitro Girls: born in Italy, she was transplanted to Oregon at age nine. Exiling herself to Los Angeles, she was acquainted with director Gregg Araki who cast her—as "a femme fatale on crystal meth and Diet Coke"—in **THE DOOM GENERA-**



Rose McGowan (c) and the Nitro Girls are **READY TO RUMBLE**. "I'd love to do period pieces," notes McGowan. "Being a jock, I have a pretty classical look."

TION (a *Washington Post* critic described it as "an arty atrocity for things that makes **NATURAL BORN KILLERS** look like **THE SOUND OF MUSIC**," McGowan related to *FF*, "The film is what you'd get if Andy Warhol and Francis Bacon took acid and decided to go on a roller coaster ride!"). Navigating mainstream, she subsequently

earned a role in **SCREAM**. One year later, McGowan was featured in no less than four films that premiered at Sundance. She pendulously swings from corporate entertainment (**PHANTOMS**) to indie (e.g. **SOUTHERN**).

When queried about her role in the pioneering **SCREAM**, McGowan told *FF*, "Look at the cast assembled for that film and you know it obviously wasn't a straight-out horror flick. Do you think these people would ever do a **FRIDAY THE 13TH** movie? Not at all!" Supported in **READY TO RUMBLE** by an Oscar-winning Martin Landau (**ED WOOD**), the actress co-stars also include Goldberg, Diamond Dallas Page, Sting, Bam Bam Bigelow, Sotara, etc. Unlike Mr. Landau, I kind of doubt there's an Oscar in the future of these players; but a few of just may volunteer to do a **FRIDAY THE 13TH** flick. □

Scott Caan & Nitro Girls ("United they dance, divided they wrestle"). The film is directed by Brian Robbins, who helmed the slapsticky **KIDZ & KILL** sitcom.



ATTRACTIONS F A T A L E

By Dan Scafferotti

● Another mummy is on the loose and, this time around, veteran director David DeCoteau (*PUPPETMASTER 3*) is pulling all of the strings: His *ANCIENT EVIL*, *SCREAM OF THE MUMMY* will debut in the summer. Michelle Erickson, who was previously cast in DeCoteau's *ALIEN ARSENAL*, is among a coterie of archeological students who are examining an Egyptian mummy. One of the gang, who happens to be a descendant of the title creature, decides to impress his girlfriend (Erickson) with a stunt that resurrects the bandaged bogeyman. *Copel Sam Irwin* (*GOODS & MONSTERS*) produced.

ANCIENT EVIL is the premiere release of Rapid Heart Pictures, founded by DeCoteau, the fledgling company's venue includes the annual production of no less than eight genre-related films. *SLEEPLESS NIGHTS* and *CREEPIES* are slated for summer shoots. For a preview, tap into www.rapidheart.com.

● As the Great Depression took root and movie attendance nosedived, Hollywood studios—desperate to munge with lost audiences—upped the ante on cheap thrills. Scantily-clad women, drug abuse and declining morals muddled movie screens. Civic patrols prompted censorship to avert government interference, studio moguls organized their own motion picture code in 1934. In his book, *Sin in Soft Focus*, author Mark Verna examines a Hollywood that was unconstrained by watchdogs. The lavish, photo-driven handbook chronicles the behind-the-scenes controversies, including scenes that slipped by censors or were sacrificed on the cutting room floor.

"I want to film school at USC in the early '70s," said Verna. "I saw a lot of these films there but I didn't know how, and why, so many of them had been so badly cut—and why a lot of them reissued out, and why you still can't see a complete version of them. I wanted to tell the story of why my favorite movies were attacked. It's about why some of them, like *THE SCARLET EMPRESS* [34], escaped damage and others didn't. No less than 14 cuts were inflicted upon *ISLAND OF LOST SOULS* when it was shown



FF cover woman Samantha Phillips (70) is a popular L.A. deepity posing for photos. Linda Tolleria, the actress is also a reporter for Playboy's erotica series, *SEXCETERA*.

around the country in 1932-'33. Paramount tried to release it in the early '40s but [Joseph] Breen, head of the Production Code Board, said, 'Look, this is one of the most heavily cut films by local censor boards. You can't really expect us to re-release it now, do you?' And he declined to give them a seal to reissue it, which was actually good because we can now see the film as it was originally shown. It escaped unscathed and intact."

On many films that were

released—like *FRANKENSTEIN*, *DRACULA* (both '31) and *808 OF THE CROSS* [32]—they would take their splicers to the negatives, and cut out those scenes and that was it. They didn't save the film! That's why it's so hard to find the cuts from *KING KONG* [33]. There's hardly any fantasy or horror film made between 1930 and 1934 that did not have cuts. There was one exception and I was totally shocked by this: *THE BLACK CAT* [34] is the most twisted film made in that

period. *THE SCARLET EMPRESS* is the most sexual and *THE BLACK CAT* is the most twisted and, by some twist of fate, both films escaped the censors. *THE SCARLET EMPRESS* was reissued in 1949, and *THE BLACK CAT* was reissued in the late '30s and again in 1952 as *THE BODY VANISHES*. Both times they didn't cut the negatives which they could have. But they did cut such classics as *PUBLIC ENEMY* [31] and those parts weren't saved."

● Samantha Phillips (*DALLAS CONNECTION*, *PHANTASM*) turns on her sex appeal as a staffer for the Playboy Channel's *SEXCETERA* series. Her first assignment as anchor woman was to strip-off her blazer (& everything else) for a one-on-one with adult film star Nina Harley in a "Hot Tub Chat" segment. A heartbeat later, she flew to Vegas for a union with X-rated luminary Serrano, who's developing an "adult toy" franchise. "I'm going to have my pussy molded," giggled Phillips. "Of course, I got to keep the one and only mold. I might turn it into a penill holder." The actress recently wrapped-up a whodunit called *THE REGINA PIERCE AFFAIR*. "I play Connie, a prostitute," she laughed. "I always play prostitutes and ladies of ill repute. I go from one prostitute to another. Here, my character is a key link for the detective investigating the murder, since I was the last person to see the victim. She and my character played internet sex games together on an adult website called Girls For You."

In addition to clocking with her daily sedo grind (*L.A.'s SHEENA AND SAM SHOW*, 97-1 PM), the bombshell found enough leisure time to perform a live striptease on *Dennis's Hard Drive* and appear in an episode of Showtime's *BEDTIME STORIES*. "I play Felicia, a woman who always had a fantasy of being with another woman. I go to a brothel run by Kim Dawson, who plays the recurrent role of Belle. I go there and have an encounter with a woman called Juliette. But she was a man and I became jealous. In the end, I approach her and suggest we all have a threesome so I can see if she looks at him the way she looks at me. The shirt that I play I mean that in a good way. These charac-

tens are so ready?"

●Correction: Damien Levey called to point out an error in FF 6/10, page 6 [hey, there's a first time for everything]. The sanguinary zebra pinching Possession (the Three Sins' rock CD) is model Taylor—not starlet Debbie Dutch. Sorry, folks.

●We'd like to thank Gary Whison, and WAIVE Productions, for handling the "prehistoric" set that was critical to last issue's Clive-woman shoot with Playboy model



Amy Lynn Miller. Whison has produced DINNER, a sexy version of Roman Polanski's AIMEZ-VDUS LES FEMMES which stars lovely underground icon Misty Mundae (damn fine actress). For details, write P.O. Box 53, Deerfield, NJ—08813. E-mail: navevde@aol.com

●On December 16th (1999), Sigourney Weaver was venerated with the final star of the Millennium on Hollywood's Walk of Fame. Among the cheering attendees was Weaver's parents and director James Cameron (the actress earned an Oscar nomination as a result of her performance in Cameron's ALIENS). Also ringing along the throngs were several clandestine Thelma from GALAXY QUEST, courtesy of Dreamworks Pictures.

Al Drago, Timeslow photographer and photo editor of www.EDN.com, recounts that Cameron brandished a copy of *Femine Fatales* 6/16—the front cover is illustrated with a photo rendering of Weaver from GALAXY QUEST—at the press conference. Upon wrapping up a speech to the assembled fans, the director addressed Weaver with, "You know you've really made it when you're on to the cover of *Femine Fatales*. Congratulations, Sigourney!" I couldn't have said it better myself, James.

●Sandra Bullock is bidding adieu to the girl-next-door image in 38 DAYS. The actress plays Gwen Cummings, a successful writer and party girl whose behavior lifestyle is detailed with a rude awakening.



Sigourney Weaver celebrates her star on Hollywood's Walk of Fame; the female's ALIENS director, James Cameron (left), congratulates Weaver on her FF cover.

After a too-intoxicating cruise in a wedding film, Cummings finds herself in a court appointed rehab center. Sins confronted with a cast of cooffenses and a choice to reform or subvert the system. (Sounds like another chick flick, GIRL, INTERRUPTED, which belted-up at the boxoffice; the script should have adhered more closely to Susanna Kaysen's book.)

●The Kenya wilderness serves as a background for I DREAMED OF AFRICA, which is based upon a true story: beautiful Kiki Gallmann, along with her son and husband, abandon the comforts of an Italian environment for the African bush. Kim Basinger is the heroine, who releases the Dark Continent's beauty is blighted by devastating

Kim Basinger in I DREAMED OF AFRICA; the actress was directed by Hugh Hudson (CHAROTS OF HES).



atoms and greedy poachers. Hugh Hudson directed the film which co-stars Eva Marie Saint.

●FF group (80s)/Playboy model Steacy Linde has been cast in LUCKYTOWN. "I helped Kristin Dand [FF 6/15] to choreograph her burlesque routine," recounted Linde. "She and I play strippers in one of the film's scenes. We had terrific rapport: Kristen is a quick learner, very polite, sweet." Linde also appeared in HDLY HOLLYWOOD, "about a small casting company battling the studio brass."

●Sci-fi alien LoriDeen Measul (CRUISING PURGATORY) co-stars with Peter Brown in an action-titled PLAN B. "The casting was akin to the 'sex change' scene in ALIEN," says Measul. "My role was originally written for a male character but it was re-tailored for me."

●Gara Barrett, FF staffer & Harvest Product Records. She's collaborating on an album with Cory Yohens (brother of actress Tina, who played "Jennifer Newton" on the FAMILY TIES sitcom).

●English diva Dita has tapped into some thing nostalgic to create something new. A four-chapter serial, DITA IN DISTRESS, was shot in black and white to approximate the pulpish, poverty-row milieu that was a staple of Saturday matinee entertainment. Each episode's running time is between 20-25 minutes. "It's a 1920s classic film style like THE PERILS OF PAULINE," said Dita. "We throw in some Ed Wood and a little bit of the all important strip tease element."

Chapter 1, JUNGLE JEDDARDY, opens with Dita—as a surrogate Annela Eschert, circa 1920s—plopping a plane on a global odyssey but her vehicle, of course, crashes in a remote jungle. "I got captured by cannibals and all sorts of horrible things happen to me," she said. "But I'm smart, and I got my way out of things or someone rescues me. I'm in all these different bondage situations as each chapter ends, and you wonder how am I going to get out of this?" You have to wait for the next episode to see what happens." Chapter 1 concludes with a nude and tethered Dita struggling in a stopgap: a couple of capricious cannibals, hungrily gazing at the model and licking their lips, also voggles into the pot.

The serial is available on video preview clips, trailers and behind-the-scenes photos are accessible on www.dita-in-distress.com. "For now, I'm trying to keep it separate from my 'members site' to give us a chance to sell it on our Dita-in-distress site," explains the model. "We're going to auction off things like the rope gag that was in my mouth and the G-string."

One lauded her career seven years ago as a Bette Page recreation. "I did every fetish magazine as Bette's favorite look-alike," she recalls. "She picked me as her favorite look-alike when they first discovered her. I did the bangs and the whole Bette Page thing. Now I do a lot of things for Playboy—their videos and Books of Lusture—and they always shoot me in a 1940s style."

●Playboy model/actress Luana Wallace was on a FF photo assignment in Baltimore when she and photographer Duane Polcaw were roughed by the local constabulary. The former Playboy model's nude poses may have provoked her reaction from a certain pectoreity. "We took some pictures by Edgar Allan Poe's grave," related Wallace. "The police chased us off because, when it comes to paying homage to Poe, they prefer that you be a bit more subtle." During the Mardi Gras, Playboy On-Line dispatched Wallace to New Orleans. "I did their live web cast. They followed my every move for a week. It was like Laura's trip to New Orleans." She subsequently shot a Loral commercial with Heather Lockier, an infomercial for Absolut and TV spots for Rally Total Fitness. Wallace's gigs, in fact, have encompassed everything from posing as a very youthful mom (for kids' toy connected to a comic book character "I'm pining for Glass House Graphics, as a castaway who's good enough to eat," she winks. "Dote better make some room in that stewpot." □



BURIAL PLACE OF
EDGAR ALLAN POE
FROM
OCTOBER 9, 1849.
UNTIL
NOVEMBER 17, 1875.

MRS. MARIA CLEMENS, HIS MOTHER-IN-LAW,
LIES UPON HIS RIGHT AND VIRGINIA POE,
HIS WIFE, UPON HIS LEFT. UNDER THE
MONUMENT ERECTED TO HIM IN THIS
CEMETERY.

Lois Wolkstein,
posing for *Guine
Poe*, culture
hobby writer
Edgar Allan Poe.
The actress/Play-
boy model has
influenced the de-
velopment of a
Globe House
Graphic comic
book series.
See <http://www.loiswolkstein.com>

"IN CROWD"

ERINN BARTLETT

THE MOVIE'S SEDUCTRESS LAUNCHED HER CAREER AS A SHARK'S BIKINI-CLAD BAIT!

BY MITCH PERSONS



IN CROWD, Bartlett (l.) w/ Lukas Forst: "My character must be the center of attention. Beneath her society girl demeanor is someone who's sinister."

"Let's see, Sheila. Lovely, lovely Sheila."

Erinn Bartlett casts her luminous eyes up to the ceiling. Musing about her IN CROWD character, she flips through a script that had been directed by Mary Lambert: it's a "home chiller" about a clique of affluent, angst-driven adolescents whose self-indulgence, conformity and moral erosion has whipped them into a feeding frenzy (their ostracism of outsiders—those who aren't heirs to family fortunes and/or genetic beauty—implodes into an "eat the rich" polemic).

"How would I describe Sheila?" Bartlett lowers her eyes and grins. "Okay, I'd say she appears to be one of those materialistic, airheaded, self-centered, boy-crazy kind of girls. Nothing seems really important to her besides the gossip of the in-crowd and who's doing what, and who's with who and who's wearing what. Every outfit that she has is meticulously put together, shows off some part of her figure and sometimes—if you know what I mean—she isn't even wearing much of an outfit. Sheila has to be the center of attention, which is easy for her because she is very sexy. But underneath her vacuous, society girl demeanor is someone who is sinister—and sinister with a capital S."

"Sheila and I may live in the same body, but that's where the resemblance between us ends. I am not a villain. I live in khakis and T-shirts and sneakers, and I definitely do not exhibit my

body as Sheila does. When I make a friend, that person is really a friend and not just an object of gossip. Take Lori Heuring, who plays Adria, the lead character in IN CROWD: We met for the first time on this movie but the way I see our time together, it was fated for me to meet her and have those weeks of bonding. We still talk every day.

"I believe very much in fate, in the power of eventual friendship. There are a few people, though, I suspected I wouldn't have gotten along with but I ended up bonding with them anyway. I look at [Katharine] Towne, who plays Morgan, the innocent of the crowd. When I first met her, I thought, 'We're kind of opposite in the sense of style and she's a bit of a wild child, I guess'—though she's not really wild—but by the end of shooting we bonded, and now I absolutely adore her.

"That bonding, that camaraderie, was really evident with everybody who was in IN CROWD. It took two and a half months to shoot. All the cast members were staying in the same hotel, and I had the best time of my life. For





“I was screaming. I thought a real shark was going to eat me. A crew stood around in parkas: I’m in this tiny bikini in this freezing water.”

—Actress Ernie Bartlett—

a lot of the movie, all of our scenes took place together as a big group, and it was a very cohesive group. We all just had a blast. When we weren't working, we were running around and going to the beach together. I made some really, really good friends.

"IN CROWD was only my second film. My first one was DEEP BLUE SEA, which was directed by Renny Harlin. I had a small role, just a couple of minutes, but the experience itself was absolutely just enormous for me. It was so amazing and intense being in a 90 million dollar production that I totally walked away a changed person.

"I'm in the opening scene. It's this little teaser, and there are four unknown kids on this boat. It's dark and the music is eerie. It's the total setup that implies 'All these kids are goners,' and it's kind of fun because we get as close as possible to being eaten. A shark crashes the boat, the boat flips over, we're in the water and we start swimming back. I'm climbing up and scraping alongside of the boat to try to get back in, and I'm looking over my shoulder and this shark is coming

7: Bartlett (p) & Laurie Foner. "Every outfit that my character wears shows off some part of her figure, sometimes. If you know what I mean, she's not even wearing much of an outfit. She appears to be one of the stereotypical, self-centered, lay-crazy girls." 8: Mary Lambert directs Bartlett and Laurie Foner

at me. I didn't have to do much acting in that scene, I really mean it. That scene was so real to me that when they yelled 'Cut,' I was still trying to get in to the boat. I thought a real shark, and not the mechanical one that they were using, was going to eat me.

"It was so cool and so real, I guess because it was the nighttime and cold, and I was screaming for my life and the water was 50 degrees. Everybody else, the crew, they were standing around in big fleece jackets and down parkas, and you can see their breath: and there I am, in this tiny bikini in this freezing cold water. The whole experience was awesome, so awesome.

"People who haven't seen DEEP BLUE SEA always ask me, 'Do you die? Do you get eaten?' I don't, actually. I'm one of the very few people who live. It's kind of neat because throughout the movie there is a little role reversal. You think, 'Oh yeah, the film's stars are definitely going to make it because they are who they are,' and that's an interesting way to look at it, because there aren't an awful lot of survivors."



KATE TOWNE

"IN CROWD"

THIS 'BUFFY' VAMP WAS ALSO CAST IN A SUPERNATURAL SAGA.

BY MITCH PERSONS

IN CROWD, directed by genre veteran Mary Lambert, is an allegory—hiding behind a "thriller" or "horror" facade—about a coterie of society snobs who take a wrong turn morally and wind up doing some pretty gross things. There are bad guys, red herrings, characters more ambiguously rendered into a shade of grey and "the innocent" (aka the dupe), the latter played by Katharine Towne.

"I play a very naive, kind of not-so-smart girl," confides the actress, who's the daughter of Oscar-winning screenwriter Robert Towne



Towne, cast as a "very naive girl" among the IN CROWD players, stars in the NBC sitcom, MY O.B. (L...It's a real winner!). L: As the enigmatic Sunday on BUFFY



(CHINATOWN) "Morgan, my character, is just basically a girlfriend to the main prankster of the group. I play the girl who is reduced to being the pretty little thing, and not much else. I'm brought up with all these rich, beautiful people but I am just not very savvy whatsoever. My best friend in the film, Shonda (Erin Bartlett), is really savvy and very gossipy, and she's always kind of lord[ing] it over me with the kind of information she has. Towards the end of the film I come to a realization

about myself and the group and kind of what crap goes on, and I begin to become a better person from witnessing the group's deterioration.

"The in-crowd are really a bunch of sickies, sadists...almost. They prey on each other's weaknesses, like using information against each other. And they openly 'out' each other about things they wouldn't want people normally to know. They also like making bets using human poker chips, so, there is this game they play called 'Never,' which becomes sort of a recurring theme in the movie. The way the game is played is that you say, 'I never...' and say something you've never done, or might have done, but everybody who has actually done it has to raise his or her hand. It's a psychological game with definite sadomasochistic overtones. It's about learning more about people than maybe you should know—or it's about people who really shouldn't know things at all. This is a game where nobody emerges a winner.

"The whole film is like that. People find themselves doing things that wouldn't normally be considered ac-

ceptable behavior: they get away with it only because they're rich or beautiful. It's pretty much a morality tale about class and society, and how far you can go if you're at the top—and then how far you can sink. There is almost a *Lord of the Flies* subtext to everything, kind of like this little tight-knit world eating itself alive. What at first seems like a cohesive, rational grouping turns out to be one that is chaotic and deadly.

"I don't think I'd be spoiling anything by saying that Morgan does manage to survive all the horror. She, as a character, is not involved in the immediate horrible activities. She's more like a mute witness to everything.

"Playing someone as shallow as Morgan is a change for me. Usually, you hear just the opposite, most new actresses—I've only been acting about two years—start off playing airheads. I've done mostly character roles. I was the villain in a film called BUT I'M A CHERLEADER. I've had parts in GIRL, THE BACHELOR AND TOWN AND COUNTRY, but probably my most notable role was Sunday, the vampire in the TV series BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER.

"The episode I was in, 'The Freshman,' was the opener for the fourth season. I play this smug, really egotistic vampire who whips Buffy's ass. Even when Buffy gets her revenge and stakes Sunday, she still retains her superior attitude—Sunday takes the whole death thing with a smile and a shrug.

"BUFFY was not the first genre film that I've done. Before that, I did WHAT LIES BENEATH. That's about

continued on page 46

LORI HEURING "IN CROWD"

MORE THAN A SCARY TEEN MOVIE?: THE LEADING LADY'S INSIGHT.

BY MITCH PERSONS

The Academic Press Dictionary of Science and Technology (of which this insufferably modest author is a contributor) defines erotomania as "an irrationally strong or persistent desire for sexual gratification."

Adrien Williams, the protagonist of Warner Bros./Marsden Creek's mystery thriller *IN CROWD*, might interpret erotomania a bit differently. "Adrien, whom I play, suffers from a form of erotomania," relates Lori Heuring (*THE NEWTON BOYS*). "Mostly, though, what happens takes place in her mind. She didn't get a lot of attention from her parents. She was an only child and she started acting up in high school, and then her parents got divorced so she was sent to her school psychologist. The man's name was Dr. Beck and he listened to Adrien, he listened to what she said and how she felt and, for the first time in her life, there was someone—an adult—who just listened and it was a phenomenal experience for her. As a result, little by little, she fell completely in love with him. He was much older and married, but, in Adrien's mind, she truly believed that they were having an affair and that they loved each other and it was consummated. And then she started telling people.

"Of course, Beck denied all of it because none of it was actually happening, but instead of handling it as he should have—in the sense of making sure Adrien got the proper care—he just ignored her, which provoked her obsession even more. It got to the point



Adhering to a genre tradition of *teeners-in-love*, Heuring expects an unwanted visit from the *IN CROWD*. "There is a fine line between sanity and insanity."

where, after school, she took a field hockey stick to his car and smashed it to pieces. She really lost it, lost the line between sanity and insanity, and to get it back she needed to be put away.

"Basically, that's the back story of *IN CROWD*. When the film begins, Adrien is being released from the mental hospital. She is still very troubled, however, and she longs for the peace of mind that she feels is long overdue her. Her doctor gets her a summer job at this very swanky East Coast country club. Adrien walks into this place trying to acclimate to being out in the real world for one thing, and then she sees this beautiful place—with all these beautiful people—and everything seems so wonderful, and she just

loves being there. She is even befriended by the main girl in the group, Britanny Foster (played by Susan Ward), and another worker at the club, Joanne (Kim Murphy). Joanne is suspicious of Britanny for some reason. She warns Adrien to keep her distance, but everything seems so normal and nice that Adrien doesn't listen. Then, weird things happen—I'm not going to say exactly what!—and the seemingly flawless Britanny blames Adrien. A 'cat and mouse' game begins between the two women, and the world which Adrien thought was so perfect turns out to be completely screwed up.

"This in-crowd environment, which at first seems so ideal and filled with beautiful people who appear to be governed by a seemingly beautiful deportment, is sort of like the outside

world in *microcosm*. The lives that appear so perfect to anyone looking in are actually just the same lives everyone else leads, except maybe with different clothing and different cars. The in-crowd has the same problems, the same feelings of inadequacy and the same feelings of jealousy as anyone else; but because their base isn't as solid as a lot of other people who have to fight to earn their way, morals and standards don't really exist.

The absence of ethics is something that Joanne has suspected of the group all along, but because she is an outsider—a component of the working class—she is powerless to circumvent the consequences.

"What Mark Gibson and Phil Halperin, the writers of *IN CROWD*,



"Wild things happen" in cat-and-mouse game begins between both women. "We won't reveal who/what, but IN CROWD's climax offers a twisted Lori Heuring (R) rendezvous with Susan Ward in a swamp (C)



wanted to do with this film is keep everyone on edge. But they also wanted to show that when you pine for something in life, it's wise to be careful of what you ask for, because what you ask for is not always what it seems.

"Adrien has had a loveless life, longs for affection, and soon develops what appears to be a very strong bond to Brittany. I'm not saying it is an out-and-out homosexual relationship, but there is definitely a bonding situation going on there. Brittany is the embodiment of everything that Adrien does not have in her life, and Brittany is aware of that; there is this kind of push and pull, sort of a mutual admiration society with a small dose of sexual attraction. Then, of course, after a while the relationship turns ugly.

"Eventually there is a murder and poor Adrien gets accused of it but, because of the mystery nature of IN CROWD, the audience

won't really sure whether she did it or not. The rest of the film is based upon 'Did she or didn't she?' 'If she didn't do it, how does she make it right?' and 'If she did, what happens?'

"Overall, what is fascinating about IN CROWD is the lengths to which people will go to be accepted. The lead-in line for the movie is 'What would you do to get in?' And it's really true. Eventually how far would someone go? What part of him or herself would that person let go of, who would that person trust, what would she or he lose, and what—if anything—would that person gain to be accepted by a group like the in-crowd? Here you have group of people who are tantalized by a world that is sinister and dangerous, and they will do anything to get there.

"It could be that the whole sinister milieu is the reason Mary Lambert was chosen as director of IN CROWD. Mary got some pretty hair-raising effects with PET SEMATARY and PET

"My character, Adrien, develops this bond with Brittany (Ward)," says Heuring. "I am not saying it's a homosexual relationship but there is a definite bonding."



"This sinister milieu is the reason that Mary Lambert was chosen as director. Mary got some hair-raising effects with PET SEMATARY I & II."

—Lori Heuring, IN CROWD actress—

SEMATARY II. She is a very visual director, very three-dimensional. In addition to the horror films, she has done quite a few videos, specifically these beautifully photographed, clearly-styled and no-holds-barred Madonna videos. There are a lot of parts in IN CROWD that Mary approaches in this same graphic way, and by graphic, I mean in good ways as well as 'bad.' In the bad ways, there is a life-or-death fight that I have with Susan Ward which should make audiences cringe. Then the murder itself is pretty horrific.

"Mary also does a lot of research in order to ensure that she is not overstepping the bounds of credibility. To allow me to interpret Adrien realistically, she took me in hand and we visited mental hospitals to get a good take on what is going on inside. We also explored what levels a person would need to be at to be in a high security mental hospital versus an open door mental hospital versus outpatient. Mary is a genuinely sensitive person, so am I. We were both rattled by what we saw. We made a half-serious pact that if either one of us were forced to stay in a hospital like the ones we visited, we'd break the other out.

"Additionally, what I learned by being around the hospitals is that there is such a fine line between sanity and insanity. In a sense, sanity is knowing you shouldn't open your mouth and say what you really think or do. You should just limit these. I think you know that line when you're sane, and you don't know that line when you're insane. As far as Adrien Williams goes, and doing what she did to get into the hospital, I think that's so possible from anybody including myself. I can, just as Adrien did, wig out and take a field hockey stick to someone's car. Fortunately, I have yet to cross over my line of sanity." □

KIM MURPHY

"IN CROWD"

IT WAS THE VIVACIOUS ACTRESS & PIZZA VS. STAR WARS' DROIDS.

BY MITCH PERSONS

When I called Kim Murphy, she was spending the Christmas holidays with her family in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

"Hi, Kim," I said. "I guess you know why I'm calling."

"Sure. You're talking about those nude photos I sent you, right?"

Say what? There was a pregnant pause as I tried to regain my composure.

"What nude pho—"

"Gotcha," chuckled Murphy. "You should visit Tennessee, it's really beautiful here."

I admitted that the only Southern locales I've visited are Florida, Maryland, and North and South Carolina.

"South Carolina," she exclaimed. "Did you go to that place called South of the Border? It's like a huge, psychotic melding of Las Vegas and Hollywood, with a hit of Tijuana thrown in. If you ever go back to South Carolina, it's worth stopping because it's so unreal, it's so manic. There are all these giant signs of guys with sunburns and stuff, this whole Mexican influence. But I guess that's not what you really want to talk about, is it?"

"Hey, I'm cool with it," I replied. "But my editor needs your input on *IN CROWD*."

"Okay. I can switch," she playfully sighed. "In the movie, I play a girl named Joanne who is a worker at this 'reddy veddy' posh East Coast country club. Joanne is the help and gets treated as such—hence, she is not one of the in-crowd, she's more the out-crowd. She is definitely the outsider looking in but it's a role she chooses to take on, because she thinks these people—these snobs—are ridiculous."

"The in-crowd are very concerned



Kim Murphy & Lori Heuring are on the sets with the *IN CROWD*. Last summer, Murphy pitched fast food as the "Pizza Hut girl" in TV spots that were tied into *STAR WARS*: *THE PHANTOM MENACE*. ("We used actual *STAR WARS* cars!")

with material things and what's cool and just anything that's 'in' partying and so forth. But Joanne just finds it all a bore. Joanne is also the one who warms Adrian (Lori Heuring), the girl she's working with, about the group because they are not only rich, hedonistic snobs but they also are dangerous...and if I say any more, I will run a perfectly good suspense story."

I asked Murphy about her working rapport with the film's director, Mary Lambert (*PET SEMATARY*).

"She's wonderful. She's like a kid. A big part of our rehearsal process was kind of exploring the whole out-of-control feelings of the in-crowd, their energy together, their do-whatever-you-want, 'live fast' kind of attitude and Mary was right there with them."

"Mary is also great about listening to the actors and making them feel valid with choices, and encouraging individual input. You can bring up suggestions to her on how to play the scene. If she thinks it is great, she'll say, 'Yeah,' and if not, she'll say, 'Nah, nah, I don't think it's going to work.'"

"Now that I think about it, everything was great about *IN CROWD*. Lori Heuring and I had a lot of fun because we were always together in most of our scenes, and we just got to play around a lot between takes."

"We were all really good friends and it's not always like that on a shoot. It was almost like summer camp because we were all staying in the same hotel, and most of us were a couple of doors down from each other. When we were not working—Lori was the only one who was working almost every day—we'd go down the hallway, roll into somebody's room and decide what to do that day. I got to hang out with Lee when she wasn't busy, and also with Ethan Erickson, who plays one of the crowd. Nothing serious with him, just fun."

Murphy is no stranger to the genre. "I was in *CAMPFIRE TALES*. There were several different directors on that one, and the section I was in was directed by David Bessel. The story is, these people get into a car accident and they're stuck in the woods. They start telling ghost stories—campfire tales—and then the stories get played out in vignettes on-screen. You find out, in the end, that actually this whole thing is a result of the driver losing consciousness: he and the other passengers, gathered around the campfire, are really dead. They perished in the car accident, and all these tales are the driver's way of buying time before facing the reality that they're dead. The film has been getting a lot of air play on cable recently."

"Other than that, I've done a lot of episodic TV and some commercials. I

continued on page 40

REBECCA GRANT THROUT & NECK

TIRED OF QUIZ SHOWS SCHLEPPED BY SENIORS? MEET THE DISTAFF SIDE OF MST3K: A HOT HOSTESS & 2 CGI-DRIVEN SIDEKICKS.

By DAN SCAPPEROTTI

Sick of the deluge of conventional Q&A quiz shows? Sick of Regis? I know I am. One option is THROUT & NECK, which is broadcast daily in a 10-80PM ET slot on the fledgling Game Show Network. Just think of it as a distaff side of MYSTERY SCIENCE THEATRE 3000. The show is fueled on the repartee between a couple of computer-animated gnomes who trade quips with contestants and delectable hostess, Rebecca Grant. The purple Throat and green hued Neck interact with Grant from their individual video monitors.

Groomed as a TV newscaster, Grant studied communications and journalism at the University of Buffalo. While her degree didn't get her much media visibility, her modeling gigs opened some doors. "I've been modeling since I was 13 years old," said Grant. "I'm not very tall. I'm only like 5 foot, 4 inches. I've been very lucky doing the modeling that I have done because I'm not tall, but I've done a lot of catwalk work back in New York. I've also done things with my eyes and a lot of fitness and swimsuit modeling—mostly with athletic sort of things."

She eventually landed an on-camera job with ESPN's U.S. Men's Pro Ski Tour. "That's how I ended up getting into sports," she smiles. "They were looking for a reporter to go to the different ski locations. It was really hard work, let me tell you. So that, in the capacity of hosting, is how I got my feet wet hosting. A short stint with a local cable station, on the Buffalo Bills NFL Show, followed."

Grant was working for a computer company when she was relocated to



Rebecca Grant trades banter with CGI companions, THROUT & NECK. "I keep 'em in line. One's live and animated, real time, computer-generated games."

California. "When I came out here, I jumped into an acting class because that's what I always wanted to do. I ended up booking some small parts on BAYWATCH, THIRD ROCK FROM THE SUN and PROVIDENCE. I really haven't broken into the acting aspect of my career yet because I had such great luck with hosting, where you get to be more yourself. I've only been doing acting for a few years and hosting comes more naturally to me. I'm looking forward to some upcoming movies that I've been working with some producers on."

Dispatched to an audition for THROUT & NECK, Grant learned that one of the requisites for the job was maintaining a verbal banter with the titular co-hosts. "You have to be very quick," she said. "That's how the audition process was. The producers would ask, 'What do you think?'—or this or that—'Now tell us something funny.' It wasn't really standup but they wanted to see how you were going to react, and what would you do with

the dialogue and how would you expand upon it. The whole thing was very silly but now it all makes sense to me."

The show's contestants, obligated only to dial a toll free number, compete from the comfort of their homes.

"It's an interactive game show which is very different because it's live TV," explained Grant. "It's really fun, goofy humor. We're getting a big fan base. I'm getting 300 e-mails a day. It's so different working with two animated computers, it took a while to get used to that. Seeing that they're comedians made it a little easier to catch on."

"One's live and animated, real time, computer generated video games. We have four games through out the show and contestants can call in from anywhere in the U.S. You don't have to have the internet or anything like that. All you need is a television that shows the Game Show Network and a touch-tone phone. You call in and we arrange which game you get to play. You choose if you want to be Throat or Neck, they both have different personalities. Some people just call in because they like to be on TV, and like to talk to me and stuff. It's a lot of fun. You get to play video games while you get your spotlight on live TV."

Though sharing the show with a couple of ad-libbing CGI critters, Grant will hardly defect from the limelight. "I'm the glue that sticks everything together because I'm kind of running the show," she grinned. "I have to keep them in line because they get out of hand with their wild, crazy, zany wisecracks. Because the show does take place in a crazy environment, a grungy basement, I got to stand out as



REBECCA GRANT

"Part of the set collapsed on me! These two guys I work with make fun of everything that goes on."

going to happen. The worst thing that has taken place on the show was when a game went bad—or one time the entire phone booth, where we take the calls, fell down on the set. It was funny because the whole show is so relaxed that, when something like that happens, it's not a disaster it just adds more comedy. I could see that if someone called in and said something vulgar that would put a damper on things, but probably we would just use it and just go with it and it would be really funny. I don't think anything can really go wrong on the show because these two guys that I work with make fun of anything that goes on."

While Grant has applied all her creative juices into launching the show—including writing some of the skits—she has forfeited or indefinitely postponed other prospects. Since the new network's exposure has not yet the latitude to expand via cable or satellite transmission, Grant's celebrity has not wrought projects on a mere substantive scale.



7) Educated as a newsreader, Grant has rescheduled as a model & actress. Mixing it up with cranks Thrust & Neck (9), she's dressed Barbarella-style & "been body painted from head to toe" for a Dr. Seuss routine.

much, that we put developed an interesting wardrobe for me... stuff like a Barbarella costume. We have state-of-the-art makeup and the wildest designs in clothes and boots and hair. So a lot of people love watching the show for that, too. I get so much e-mail asking, 'Where did you get your clothes? Where did you get your makeup?' One day, we went to the extreme and I got all airbrush body painted from head to toe. It was a really fun show. Each day we have a theme of a show and this

one happened to be Dr. Seuss. The entire show rhymed. They had me as a kind of a cartoon person.

"But when I was initially cast on the show, I was worried about it being live TV. I thought 'Oh no, we're going to get people calling with rude comments and other things will go wrong.' But I have to say the contestants have been really great. In the beginning, we had our problems. Some scenes didn't work and I've had part of the set collapse on me. You never know what's

"Not everyone gets the Game Show Network," she said. "If this was on A&E, and getting that type of circulation, I'm sure I would have gotten something. It's a lot of work and a lot of investment. I've finally been able to get my feet back into other arenas with my theatrical and commercial agents. But we were all thrown into THROUT & NECK, and we had to stick together to make the show successful. And you can see that it takes a lot of my time."





"I like ZORRITA because she's powerful," says Sharon O'Brien. "She chastises the bad guys who spirit the women into submission. The reality? I do it so often in films that it's like falling asleep." Photo: Linda Tefens.

Zorrita

WILL A FEMALE DIRECTOR, AND HER MODIFICATION OF EROTIC-FANTASY ICONS (MYTHIC HEROINES, GHOSTS, SCI-FI SIRENS) FINALLY CRACK THE BOY'S CLUB?



cent. We're still cranking out two films a month. When you see *FEMALIEN 2*, you'll agree. It's the most beautiful test ever."

Stelllano appears more tense: bigger budgets and bigger costs are catalysts for more vulnerability (i.e. more things can go wrong). Nevertheless, he's also just a little cocky. "My attitudes have gotten more positive," he smiles, "and I feel like I've a better handle on what I'm doing as compared to what other people do whose product is similar to mine. My taste in these films has changed recently because I expose myself to what other producers are doing. Actually, there are few producers who do this kind of 'girlie show' but their films have more serious twists. They put in sex and nudity but the picture isn't pretty. My shows have a bit of silliness, they are not depressing and often times look like cartoons with naked women."

FEMALIEN 2 is a typical Surrender version: a gaggle of gorgeous women, ranging the genre's veterans to new-

It's Heidi Prie in *THE EXOTIC TIME MACHINE*. (Q) I play Maria Antiochete. I like to ride. The main character's story after we make passionate love from time zone to time zone. We shot it in a castle in Passadena."



"This is somewhat of an unusual genre and I don't think it's anything that is shameful," shares director Madison Monroe. "And if people want to make porno, that's fine with me. But coming up in this business as a female director, a lot of people don't understand what my films are and just call them porn even though they're not. Sure the sex is gratuitous, but that also happens in real life, too. We have strict regulations: you can't use certain sex toys, and you can't show certain body parts. You must keep up the level of romance sexually as opposed to graphic pumping."

"Years ago, as an actress, I did love scenes and nudity but now it's my personal choice to direct, and I need to keep my distance as the director. Besides, you need an amazing body to do this stuff and although, I'm happy with my body, I don't think anybody else would want to see it on film [laughs]."

Sipping coffee at a quaint little dive only a stone's throw away from Larry Flynt's headquarters, Monroe talks about cracking the Boys Club. As one of Surrender Cinema's directors, she's among the few females to helm erotica, with *PIANTOM LOVE*, *DIARY OF LUST* and *ZORRITA*.

I open by asking her if actresses, required to perform softcore sex scenes, are less nervous with a female rather than a male director. "Yes," replies Monroe without pause. "The actresses I've worked with basically say that they all feel more comfortable with a woman director, and I think it's just a sense of trust. It's not to say that men can't be trusted, but I think it's a trust that women are not going to exploit the actresses and that women are not looking at them in a certain way that might make them feel uncomfortable. I let them know I've acted and when they sense that, they know it's not all about the sex."

"As a female coming up in this business, a lot of people call my films porn even though they're not. Yes, the sex is gratuitous but that happens in real life, too."



ZORRITA: Shanna O'Brien, who gets the drop on Megan Denver, has wrapped *LADY CHATTERLEY*, a Showtime TV series ("I play this lusty little character").

They then feel that I don't see it as less about acting and more about sex. I realize what we're making and I'm not trying to downplay the sex, but what's erotic to me is different from a man. The company wants female directors now and I think females give the films a different flavor.

"I hate to make a generalization but men are more visual so a lot of times, as directors, I think they want to see more skin. But to me what is erotic is letting the imagination go with it. And perhaps it's more about being more romantically erotic. A woman wants to be stroked and touched more, and looked at more deeply, and it's that kind of prelude that can only enhance the sexual tension that you have. On the other hand, I also haven't felt different with guys just because I'm a woman. If they feel safe, and they know what you're doing, that's all they care about. We're there to work."

"Let's be honest here.

These are 90-minute feature films with stimulated sex thrown in. But I look at them as I would any other film. There's a story to tell, characters to develop, a mood to create. It's not *BRAVEHEART*, but it's a story I do minor script changes because they sometimes tend to be campy."

When I address her with a query about how she supervises an actress through a sex scene, Monroe quips, "I feed them drugs and alcohol [laughing closer to the microphone]...I'm just kidding, it's a joke. I explain to an actress how I shoot and try to get an idea of their comfort zone. Bottom line: if they're not comfortable, you won't get what you want from them. I don't do this. Look, hurry up, let's do this. We are running out of time" speech—although I will to my crew [grins]. I deal with people on a level of how I would want to be dealt with. As an actress, you can't feel rushed. I take the time to talk with them through a

love scene. I'll explain what we are shooting, going from this position to that position and *If there is something you want to do, I'll follow your lead but if you need direction, I'll be there.* And I assure them that there won't be any exploitation shots—areas that they don't want to be shown and areas we won't show. To me, it's about the beauty of a woman's body. The experienced actresses will actually say, 'Don't shoot me like that. I like this side of me better,' so I respect that."

"Plus, we also do a Blockbuster R-rated version of our films, so there is a certain amount of nudity we can't do. Basically, these have less nudity and things are more implied. I get final cut."

Born and raised in Buffalo, New York, Monroe later moved to Atlanta where she enrolled at Georgia State University, earning a B.A. degree in Theatre and Communication, she pursued an acting career for more than 15 years. Making a transition from stage to "tons of commercials and industrial films," Monroe proved a draw in a province declared as a hot spot of beautiful women. Three years ago, confident that she could move up the ladder, the fledgling actress flew to Hollywood.

"I really thought I was big stuff but work wasn't coming, which was a shock because I was always working in Atlanta. It was an ego killer. I realized things were not going to be easy in L.A. I got other odd jobs but I needed to work in the industry, so I decided to become a script supervisor and learned it on my own. I did little freebie things here and there, then got my first official job with Surrender Cinema. Then one day, while I was script supervising an ongoing late night erotic television series, and after a peculiar string of meltdown events, I eventually ended up directing one of the episodes."

"I then approached Pat

[Siciliano] about directing for Surrender and he thought it would be a tough sell because I hadn't directed any erotica. But when I showed him the estranged episode that I directed, and upon reminding him that it took me only two days to complete, he went to bat for me. With his backing, the backing of another director and my first AD [Assistant Director], who is the UPM [Unit Production Manager] for Surrender, he was able to land me an opportunity to direct one of their films.

"Pat was willing to give me a chance and a lot of people won't do that unless you're established. It's all Catch-22: how can you be established without getting work? It's nothing glamorous, but it is directing and I know I love directing and working with the actors. I'm now able to hone my craft, and you never know in this town what goes where."

Eyes wide open—maybe it's the coffee—Monroe prods me to "Go ahead, ask me if directing these films will close doors. My answer? I don't know. I hope that it's my work that is judged and not the style of the film. I'm proud of my work but I also still don't know the whole game well enough yet. With

The cast of ZORITA includes Nancy O'Brien. Her credits include CLUB WILD SIDE & WEB OF SEDUCTION.



"Actresses I've worked with say they feel more comfortable with a woman director. I'm not down-playing the sex, but what is erotic to me is different from a man."



O'Brien practices her fencing. "There were 2 scenes, with me slicing it out with some hooligans but, unfortunately, they never did make it into the final print."

actors, for example, if they included nudity on their demo reels, they would—unfortunately—be stereotyped; so you do one nude scene and that's why you're consistently hired to be a T&A model or actor.

"It's a misconception in film that if you take off your clothes for the camera you are not a real actress. It's hard work. But one also has to take responsibility so, if you take off your clothes, make sure you can act or you will be stereotyped. But if all you want to do is nudity, go for it. Whatever anybody wants to do with their life is their business. You just have to also be willing to handle the consequences of your actions. As far as directors are concerned, I don't know the repercussions of shooting this type of film. I haven't had to deal with that. All I know is when I'm at parties and peo-

ple find out what I direct, they are fascinated that a female does this. I don't know if it's because they don't expect females to direct these kind of films, but it doesn't matter. If you are a director, you are a director. I'm still the same person. It is interesting though that people will label you and look at you differently. I know how it is and I'm not naive about it, and I don't know if they're telling me the truth [laughs]. All I know is I get offered a lot of head shots...

"But I am particular about who I cast. Part of it is, of course, the looks; but for me it's either their acting or reading that is important. Naturally, the producers and investors have their say but I'm fortunate they give me great latitude. Plus, I'm open minded. I will always give everyone their time if they come to audition

and, if they're nervous, I'll help by directing them through. You don't just excuse them quickly because that can hurt their confidence; and though someone may not get a part in one film, I can use them—if they can act—in something else. I got a lot out of my cast; we work at a fast pace, and that's a pressure for the actresses, as well as being there in the nude. But the crew is professional, everyone feels comfortable and we have a good system. I've got to be creative at a moment's notice. So when I have to do a bigger film, and when all I have to do is shoot four or five pages of script a day, that will be a luxury."

Monroe made her feature-length directing debut with PHANTOM LOVE. The cast included Griffin Drew, a certified scuba diver and guest host for over 75 morning radio shows, who danced with the Atlanta Ballet. In addition to gigs on TV (e.g. CONFESSIONS, L.A. HEAT, et al), Drew is a familiar face in movies directed by B-masters Fred Olen Ray (BIKINI HOG- DOWN, MASSEUSE, DINOSAUR ISLAND) and Edward Helman (SINFUL INTRIGUE, FRIEND OF THE FAMILY, FORBIDDEN GAMES). Her venue also includes roles in a couple of CD-interactive games, Blue Heat and Pandora's Poker Palace.

Drew is supported by Michelle von Flotow, a collegiate soccer player and sky diver who's cut her teeth with bits in FIRE DOWN BELOW, POOLS RUSH IN and AUSTIN POWERS: The balance of the cast included Shamen Malone, Lesley Taylor and Sandy Waack, whose dance training has garnered her exposure in prime time (BEVERLY HILLS 90210, SLIDERS, et al) and films (ARMAGEDDON, SHOW-GIRLS, THE DEVIL'S ADVOCATE).

PHANTOM LOVE chronicles the adventure of a journalist (von Flotow) who's suffering from writer's block.

She's dispatched to Florence, Italy to rekindle the romance and passion that have evaporated from her writing and personal life. "It's a love story," Monroe posits. "And we really didn't go to Florence, we're just clever with our locations. We shot at this beautiful mansion that looked Italian. Our journalist discovers this journal that dates back to the late 1800's, so we flash-back to that period and focus on the story of a woman who's played by Griffin.

"This woman's spirit from the 1800's lingers within this inn that she owned; the 'phantom' part is the modern woman sent there by this reading. Actually, we do have a ghostly apparition during a dream sequence where the DP came up with some very cool lighting effects and the wardrobe lady, Lisa Rhodes, was just amazing with the costumes she came up with."

A couple seated at a table next to us lean over to pick up sound bites of our conversation. The fetching woman turns out to be *FF* centerfold OC Costigan (8:11). "Oh wow, I know you," she smiles at Monroe. "I almost worked for you on *PHANTOM LOVE*." A couple of Hollywood hugs later, Costigan takes a sip of iced tea, says something to her male companion and exits into the L.A. heat. "Well," shrugs Monroe, "this once again it proves that Hollywood is a small world."

After briefing me on the casting process for *PHANTOM LOVE* (25 bombshells competed for the lead), Monroe shifts the conversation to her second Surrender film, *DIARY OF LUST*. The film starred Carna Keys, an advanced weight trainer and dancer whose stage apprenticeship was developed with the likes of *Stript* and *Viva Les Femmes*. In addition to a hit in *SHOW-GIRLS*, Keys has landed a

Surrender veteran Vanessa Blue (J.P. SERVICE, *DUNCEON OF DESIRE*) is cast as the original ZORRITA; her legacy is passed to Sienna O'Brien.



surfeit of guest appearances on TV (BOB CAT'S BIG ASS SHOW, EROTIC CONFESSIONS, GENERAL HOSPITAL) and—go figure—THE THREE STOOGES' GREATEST HITS). She was supported by Michelle Turner and Mia.

DIARY involves a a coterie of gamblers who attend the auction of a house; naturally, they're inherently negotiating for orgasmic rewards. "The way the bidding is decided is by their sense of erotica," explains Monroe. "The owner of the home guides them to this diary of things that happened in the house, and their level of sexual eroticism is tested and booked up to this monitor and they flashback to the times of the diary. And so they become the same people that occupied the house in past epochs. It's interesting to go back to these periods. It's similar to Surrender's EXOTIC TIME MACHINE except that this is much more moody."

"Prior to directing these movies, do you research the subject by popping in some tapes and watching a lot of erotic situations?" I ask.

"No," grins Monroe. "I participate in a lot of erotic situations. Just kidding. You know, with these erotic and love scenes, you can't do too much that is different, it's all about the prelude to them and what comes after that gives them the different feel. Basically, the point of these films is achieving this sheer sense of eroticism. The love scenes are done pretty much the same, at least action-wise, but the setting and lighting are different and, of course, period pieces offer a different flavor. However, there is no fooling here; the bottom line is that everything is done as erotically as possible."

"And I must tell you that I take my very work seriously and that everything is a stepping stone, and I'm happy to be working in this genre of film. And, absolutely, I watch my films to not only see how they look but to also see how they all

"Men are more visual so lots of times, as directors, they want to see more skin. But, to me, what's erotic is letting the imagination go with it: romantically erotic."



Shauna O'Brien's ZORRITA vs. Jesse Cameron. "I appreciate being directed by a woman in this movie," says O'Brien. "Men don't understand a woman's spin on eroticism. You see, men typically think of sex as fucking, not making love."

come together. I've also been asked if I get turned on during the shooting of these erotic scenes. Well, I don't but I do get elated and, at times, will applaud because it's about having a good dramatic scene and you can get moved."

ZORRITA, Monroe's latest saga, is another period piece: this time around, she pays homage to Zorro, a caped crusader who premiered in Johnston McCulley's pulp fiction. Incarnated on-screen by male thespians (Tyronne Power, Michael Gough, Guy Williams, Antonio Banderas), Monroe has circumvented tradition by turning the hero into a femme fatale. The title character is played by Shauna O'Brien, a champion horse-riding and erotic thriller diva whose credits include MALIBU BIKINI WEEKEND, THE ESCORT, FUGITIVE RAGE, and MIDNIGHT BLUE; her TV work is as variable as STAR TREK, BUFFY, BEVERLY HILLS

BORDELLO and MADAM WINSTON'S SECRETS! O'Brien's heroine sustains a legacy launched by Venessa Blair, who portrays the pioneering Zorrita. Blair is a familiar face among Surrender aficionados: the starlet was previously featured in the company's LIP SERVICE and DUNGEON OF DESIRE. Nancy O'Brien, who plays tantalizing Teresa, piled her modeling and ballet training until she was cast in a string of movies (WEB OF SEDUCTION, LIFE OF A GIGOLO and CLUB WILD SIDE, the latter a melodrama co-starring Monique Parent).

"As you very well know from speaking with Venessa Blair, ZORRITA is—indeed!—like a female Zorro," says Monroe. "It's a wonderful script but it's more of a love story with sadly minimal fencing because we didn't have enough time for that sort of thing."

At this point, I can't help but share a behind-the-

scenes vignette with Monroe. During the film's pre-production phase, Pat Sullivan phoned me. He asked yours truly to draw upon my experience with Chinese film choreography and tutor O'Brien on her fencing and swordfighting postures. Volunteering to furnish the actress with some lessons, I showed up at the designated gym. Unfortunately, I was the only one to show up.

"Oh, sorry about that," says a genuinely disappointed Monroe. "That just would have been so cool. I didn't know! I was still filming DIARY OF LUST at the same time I was also casting for ZORRITA. Venessa Blair plays Emma, who's the original Zorrita and is married to the lord of the manor, Trelayne. Bella [O'Brien] comes to work for him. Basically, it's just the story of the legend of Zorrita coming back to life to battle the oppressive rule of Trelayne, who is taking away everybody's sex. Bella reads a book on the legend of Zorrita and is so fascinated by her that she wants to become Zorrita. Eventually, it is Zorrita's passion and sexuality that is even more overpowering than her mastery of the sword. So she has sex with different characters and uses her sexuality to defeat her opponents."

Trivia alert: *THE EROTIC ADVENTURES OF ZORRO* (1972) was the first film to burlesque McCulley's pulp hero within a softcore milieu. Douglas Frey, cast as the masked avenger, was abetted by 70s sex luminaries Kathy Hilton (*THE TOY BOX*) and Lynn Harris (*THE COCKTAIL HOSTESSES*).

As we exchange final salutations, Monroe offers some counsel for aspiring actors: "You have to be careful of what part of yourself you put in other people's hands. You have to be smart, cover your butt and take on a lot of responsibility for yourself. But that goes for any business. As an actor, I'm not a believer in acting classes and I've said

many I did it for a different experience, got the experience and now I'm done. I want to do serious films. I mean, Surrender's movies are what they are. They are tits and ass and guys watch them to jack off. That's cool and I don't care, I just don't want to do it anymore."

When I was introduced to Lovell a couple of years ago, she cited her career goal as "having fun and going with the flow." She admits that her bohemian demeanor has been tainted with cynicism. "It's hard to trust because everybody gives you a bunch of bullshit. They say all these wonderful things and then, nine times out of ten, it never happens. People like to talk and pretend they have all these important things going on, but it's all false. I'm not like that, I just want to be mellow, relaxed and want to enjoy life. I don't want to be stressing out about all these things."

"When I got into this, it's true, I did it for the fun; but when the fun stopped, it was time to leave Surrender. It just wasn't fun anymore. It becomes a pain in the ass when you do it for hardly any money. I will never get residuals and they will get shitloads of money on that. I will never get to see money and they don't support my insurance. Why should I give to them when they don't give back?"

"You are only 23," I note, "and I sense your kind of eschewing your career."

She laughs. "I know I just want to take a break. I feel like I've done so much, and have been through so much over the past years. I just want to relax a bit. I'd like to say that anybody who is thinking about getting into this business—and they are not sure—don't do it unless you are certain you'd enjoy it: if you're not, get out. It's not worth it." □

Anthony Lemine in *FEMALISH 2*. "I did my first love scene in that film & I did it in freezing water. You have to act happy, sexy, beautiful. But I just wanted to get it done, it's over!"







Venessa Blair is
ZORRITA (her
character's legacy
is passed to
Shane O'Brien,
pages 15-17).
"This is my last
Sawyer film,"
says Blair. "It was
a very fast shoot &
very hot." Photo:
Linda Thelma.

Venessa Blair

ABANDONING A BARBIE DOLL BRAINWASH, SHE PLUNGED INTO ACTING. FIRST, SHE PERFORMED TENNESSEE WILLIAMS' AND THEN SURRENDER.

BY CRAIG REID

"Doing nudity is being with the school of hard knocks. It's like being thrown into an orphanage and being abandoned. Someone says, 'Here, this is your list for tomorrow, be ready.' With hair of fire, lips ablaze and eyes as sharp as her wit, Venessa Blair reflects on a professional cliffhanger. Transplanting herself to New York, the actress—in pursuit of non-exploitative roles and a shot at the "big time"—has resigned from a lucrative career as an American Airlines flight attendant and purser.

"I wish there was a choice besides acting, but what else could I do?" she utters. "I've tried other things—like decorating and hostessing—but acting is the only thing I want to do. The pain comes from when you see other people who are doing better than you, and seeing missed opportunities when you think you should have been in the door. And you don't know what's real and what's not half the time. Everybody is going up and coming down the scale in the entertainment industry, so you have got to do whatever you can to pay the bill and to get a career going. It's not big pay but—then again—when I work, I love it."

Born in Boise, Idaho, she pretty much lived out of a suitcase. Her father's military vocation prompted plenty of travel and an early divorce from Blair's mother. "Whenever my father would have to go someplace, and I wanted to go, I would show up with my bags packed. I've lived in Germany, South America, Rhode Island, Texas. Need I continue? But, right now, my blood is boiling for opportunities in New York. I'm hoping to stimulate my career because there is a lot of independent stuff out there. My manager's east coast office thinks I can do well there. It's likely I could boost my resume



The only thing Blair can recall about LIP SERVICE, her second surrender film, is she can't identify with her role of a porn star. And the director was male.

then return back here to L.A. I like the environment out there. L.A. has a lot of negative energy and I don't like that... and I'm not stimulated here. Actually, I've found Hollywood to be a big disappointment because people don't always mean what they say. Maybe their intentions are good, but why bother to say anything in the first place?

"I quit my job for my career. I gave up the security of the airline industry and my lifestyle to become a starving actress. But I know, if given the opportunity, I can make it. It comes down to this: I'd rather be a B-film star than do a job for years on end just for the pay and the benefits and being unhappy. I like the motivation, the challenge of what I'm doing and I'm good at what I do and I love auditioning."

Her film credits include *RED STEEL*, *A LESSON IN FEAR* and *OUT WEST*—some roles in prime time—*FRESH PRINCE OF BEL AIR*, *SISTERS AND DIAGNOSIS MURDER*—further boosted Blair's confidence. Her impassioned performance as Blanche DuBois, in the San Francisco Theatre production of *A Streetcar Named Desire*, earned sterling reviews. So how did Blair, who declines to cover her tracks with a pseudonym, oscillate from Tennessee Williams to Surrender Cinema?

"In regard to my billing, well, what are you going to do," she quips. "I mean it's me, so just forget the fake name thing. Surrender makes the kind of films my father must not see. The bottom line is this: these films are more about paying the rent, and I have two dogs to feed and I like where I live. Plus, it keeps my flow of work going and work begets work. And as far as the nudity? I'm okay with it although it's not what I want to do. As a matter of fact, I've just finished this black & white movie called *MAN'S BEST FRIEND*, where I play a white trash

"I gave up the security of a job in the airline industry to become a starving actress. I'd rather be a B-film star than do a job, for years on end, just for pay & benefits."



The two *DUNGEON OF DESIRE* players O'Don (left) plants one on Blair, her predecessor. The new breed of explicit & sensuous-looking self-indulgence. Blair recalls the budgetary constraints. "I have a sword but there are no fencing scenes!"

housewife, and it's completely the opposite of these Surrender films; there is no nudity and there is nothing erotic about it."

Prior to discrediting for multiple Surrender movies, she performed—sans wardrobe—as a "part Scottish, part Cherokee Indian"—for Playboy's *Mystique* Films (the character somehow goes "Darling" with a Gabor-like affectation). Playboy's casting director later hired Blair for *DUNGEON OF DESIRE*, the actress' first film for Surrender.

"I have a reputation of being a strong actress," she smiles. "And I can hold the set up, so to speak. And so Surrender called me and I came in and the director [Scottishwoman/fellow red-head Rachel Gordon] liked me. I play Queen Aura and have this English accent. I have a good accent."

I ask her for an im-

prompta impersonation of her British accent: after all, I'm authentically U.K. and I vow not to judge her dialect.

"Now hold on a minute," laughs Blair. "You're putting me on the spot, here. Of course, you will judge me, darling. I had a Scottish nanny growing up and I like my tea white, with milk and sugar, and have it every morning and between three and four in the afternoon with biscuits. In fact, my family owns a castle on the Scottish-English border."

When I ask her to describe Queen Aura, her *DUNGEON OF DESIRE* character, she replies, "Well, she's strong, manipulative, deceiving, a liar, conniving and an impostor. Everything I am [laughs]. Just kidding. But, you know, the memorable moments I have with this film was the last day of shooting..."

"On that day, I had 11 scenes and I was in all of them, all day long. Major dialogue, loves scenes and I was in this English period piece costume with my hair and jewels. My hair would be up, then down, up, down. You see, the makeup artist got sick and left me—abandoned me!—and the whole set fell apart, and we kept working and it was very tough. So I have to do my own hair and makeup, while the first AD [Assistant Director] is yelling at me. The wardrobe gal was good for nothing and didn't know anything, so I had to take care of that."

"When you are doing different scenes out of context and you have to have continuity, it's very hard. I was an actress, makeup artist, wardrobe person. I was doing it all. But now when I look back at it, it makes me laugh. I am waiting for the big time."

"Ah, but that was not all," Blair breathlessly continues. "There was an actor who was not prepared, he just kept screwing up his lines and didn't know what he was doing—period! The queen should have tossed him into the closet because that is just where he belonged [snickers]. These

Blair in her Surrender debut, *DUNGEON OF DESIRE*. "On the last day of shooting, I was in 11 scenes!"



films are shot very quickly, four to five days, 16 hours a day, so you had better know what you are doing. When he was screwing up his lines, it was pissing me off and I told him that you just can't do that here because we are working too fast. It's very exhausting to work like that for the crew and cast. It hurts everybody."

In her subsequent film for Surrender, *LIP SERVICE*, Blair played a porn star. Her recollection of the film is limited: the director was male. And the production was shot above her home in Hollywood Hills, the same locale where HBO filmed *THE RAT PACK*, a movie about Sammy, Dean, Frank and Joey.

A couple of weeks ago, Blair wrapped her third and perhaps final film for Surrender. Directed by Madison Monroe, *ZORRITA* is the company's not-so-venerable lampoon of Johnston McCulley's pulp fiction hero, who's often incarnated on film and TV. In the event that you haven't had a long, hard look at this issue's front cover, here's the big news: in Surrender's spin on the classic, *ZORRITA* is a swashbuckling babe who sexually compromises her opponents. "The movie is

Blair as ZORRITA. "The film is based on THE MASK OF ZORRO (1940) I'm sort of Anthony Hopkins' character."



"The sex in these films is not unlike what's seen in mainstream films. If you're Ellen Barkin in SEA OF LOVE, you get a stand-in. That's the only difference."



Ellen Madison, Blair and Michelle Turner after *LIP SERVICE*. A private eye and her L.I.P. operatives rescue Monique St. Claire, an abducted adult superstar.

based upon the latest Zorro film [1988's *MASK OF ZORRO*]," says Blair. "I play the original Zorrita, who is a swordswoman opposed to evil. She steals from the rich and gives to the poor in her everlasting battle for the poor and downtrodden. Essentially, I play the Anthony Hopkins character from the '88 version of *ZORRO*. So now I'm retired and the new one—the next Zorrita [Shanna O'Brian]—comes to help me. I don't touch her anything, she just reads the book on the legend and is so fascinated by it that she wants to change things and become Zorrita. I'm not only Zorrita but also Emma, wife of the evil lord. Again, it was a fast shoot and very hot. I have a sword but there is no fencing. We were supposed to have horses but we didn't have any and, oh, I had a whip."

"What's vivid about this

film is just sitting out in the heat everyday. The catering guy normally catered porno films and he was very interesting to talk to—like how much money he makes and what they did on those film sets. He assured me that we are definitely not doing porno films, but I'm sure there is someone out there who is going to tell me that it's porn and that I am going to hell or something."

I ask if she can relate to the psyche of any one of her scripted characters. Blair tells me to scratch *LIP SERVICE*'s porn star. No way can she identify with that. "But I do relate to the queen in *DUNGEON OF DESIRE*. I like to wield my power and authority. She is trying to prevent the prince from taking the throne with the other woman that I don't like, the princess. But I'm actually not the queen but an imposter. It's a bit of a crazy

twist at the end. It was fun and I should get some good demo footage from it, I hope."

In regard to performing erotic scenes, I query if there are any significant differences between being directed by a male and female.

"Well, when I did *ZORRITA* for a woman, Madison Monroe," notes Blair. "The way she wanted me to shoot the intimacy and sexuality was much different than with a male. It wasn't so much like what men view as a sex scene—you know, the 'guy thing.' 'As you're masturbating the sex, get on her and you know what to do and now have an orgasm sort of thing.' Madison was more like, 'Slowly put your hand down there and touch lightly like that,' and she was telling the DP [Director of Photography], 'Make sure you follow the hand going down.' And she kept saying things like, 'Yes, that is really pretty.' It's, I think, a better visual for the eye."

"But those films are really not so unlike the kind of sex they show in most mainstream films nowadays. If you are Ellen Barkin in *SEA OF LOVE*, you get a stand-in, that's the only difference. But, I must admit, I am more comfy doing sex and nudity with a female director because I relate better to a woman. Men are too crazy."

"My father knows I do nudity but doesn't know how much, and I prefer he doesn't know—although I've been told I look good [laughs]. At least I look good. But I really haven't done anything else, other than kiss and have my body touch another man's or woman's. Those films are really not what you imagine and not even close to pornography. They are so comical, and it's a closed set working with the actors. Everybody is just trying to get their careers going and to get demo tape and keep working on their craft. As far as the simulated sex, I haven't even done that. Madison likes to shoot forms: like the form of my

hand going down his back, which turns into more of a silhouette-type of thing. So it's more like touching and it's pretty. It's not like with men with their gay sort of thing [affects a *gaying* sound]. I've never done that. Let's face it, you see sex in all the movies now. What is the difference? Why do you think EYES WIDE SHUT got so much publicity? Because it's all about sex and everyone wants to see it. You were made to believe you'd see nothing but they played it up like that. Personally, I couldn't care less."

Somehow, we digress into a conversation about strippers. Blair admits that she sampled the profession only for "research purposes." Huh?

"That's right," she casually grins. "It was all for a project that I was researching and writing about: living the lifestyle of a stripper. So I went to Las Vegas. I just walked in and asked if they would hire me and they said, 'Of course!'"

"Actually, it's not that simple. You have to have the body and the looks. There are all different styles of stripping and I wanted to see what it was like. I only did it for one month for three weekends in a row. It was one of the best strip places in Vegas and it was really wild, but I can tell you it is not a life for me. However, it was interesting to see the life and learn about it. They work way too hard for the money. I don't think the money is enough to do that sort of stuff. You only bring in about \$1,000 a night. I mean that's okay but for the hours you dance! The thing is that your knees can get bruised up pretty badly. I certainly wasn't good the first night [laughs]. I think they pitted me."

So if the dancing sucks, do guys do the "guy thing"? "You know, like humping? "Well, this was a very big end

Blair As ZORRITA: "These films are not what you imagine, and they're not even close to pornography. Hey, I haven't even done simulated sex!"



club where they have five platforms and there are many beautiful women stripping at a time, so they are always excited about someone and so there is no booring. You know, the men get in there and start drinking and sometimes get to talking to one person. A woman can rake in all of a guy's money just by sitting and talking. Like I said, it's no life for me and that sentiment extends to the kind of films that Surrender makes. *ZORRITA* is my last Surrender film."

Blair insists that nude scenes still unnerved her. "I can't explain how you get over the nervousness, except that the director tells you, 'Hey, you have a great body and you look great, what are you going to do?' It's important to now be attentive to my own needs and watch what I'm doing. And that, basically, is why I'm heading to New York. I want to do different things. I still get phone calls from people who say they saw me on the Playboy Channel. I usually answer by asking them, 'Did I look good?' If they say I did, then I'm okay with it."

"I've been asked if doing sex in film affects sex at home. No. Because, in the reality of film, you're really only in the mode for a few minutes at a time, then you put on a robe and it's very private. However, it can definitely affect your relationship with a boyfriend. I have a boyfriend now and he has no problem with what I'm doing. In fact, he's a kinky sexual animal and wants to watch my films. It's about confidence. One of the girls on *ZORRITA* is married and just had a baby, and her husband knows what she does and is very honest. But I remind you, once again, the love scenes aren't what you think they are. In fact, the love scenes are stupid in a way. It's actually more erotic if you show two people with their clothes on half way behind a door. That's more erotic

"I must admit I am more comfy doing sex and nudity with a female director because I relate better to a woman. They're more visual. Men are just too crass."



Blair as ZORRITA. "I'm ready for the big time. I'm now comfortable with myself and nudity if I have to do a great love scene with someone—like Tom Cruise."

to me, trying to figure out what they are doing and seeing hands move rather than all that naked skin. I did this film called *DANGEROUS WATERS* where I had a love scene on a boat. We were on location on two boats on the ocean and I did scuba diving scenes—I'm a certified scuba diver. The guy I was with at that time couldn't handle the love scene, so we broke up."

Blair, in fact, gave Surrender as Acting 101, an overture to corporate Hollywood. "I'm now ready for the big time," she proclaims. "If I'm on set and have to work all day, under rough conditions and with a popular star, I won't be intimidated. I've worked. I know what

I'm doing, it's 11 scenes in one day, 16-hour days. I've been involved in films where people do more things on set than just acting. I'm ready, learned a lot and have become comfortable with myself and nudity if I have to do a great love scene with someone. Like say Tom Cruise. But I won't do nudity for low budgets anymore."

Between pictures, Blair functions as a volunteer for charities, including shelter for abused animals and AIDS therapy. "I'm a Gemini," she blurts. "And a helicopter skier. That's where a helicopter flies to the most remote places and drops you off on a ridge designated as avalanche territory. Then you ski for all year

worth and hope that the required beeper attached to your body, which signals rescuers to find you if your body winds up trapped beneath an avalanche, is not needed. It's an extreme sport. I've seen people buried up to their necks in snow, scared as hell and frightened to death. I've been lucky so far. I'm an extremist in my way of life and I love to take risks. Why else would I quit the airline industry to become an actress? But I'm much happier doing films than sitting in an office watching a clock all day and wasting my mind."

"That's right, for six weeks American Airlines cut off all my hair and tried to brainwash me. They want you to look like a Barbie doll and break your spirit [long, sardonic laugh]. They didn't. But on the other hand, I had a great time flying. I have some good friends from those days and I still use that experience today. I just flew one of the world's richest billionaires and his new wife all around Europe for six weeks on his G-4. I can't reveal his name, because I do this on the side when I am not acting. My culinary degree also comes in handy when I do this."

And finally, we hear a reality check about the casting couch. "I won't sleep with anyone to get a part," says Blair, "and I won't be. It's not worth it for me to do that. What's frustrating is that I know a lot of people who should have helped me by now, but everyone wants a star in the bag. It's enough to drive you mad. Sometimes you get stuck. This rich guy I just spoke about that I flew around Europe? He is the owner of one of the big studios in town, and I can't tell him I'm an actress because of the nudity. If I told him, I might never get to do the private jet stuff again."

And then, another reality check. "I guess maybe, if it's not meant to happen, then it's not meant to be. I'll sleep with someone I like." □



Blair (C) makes LIP SERVICE with a coterie of sexy gardeners (L, Sherie Melrose, Zoe Pass, Blair, Michelle Turner). "I've been asked if doing sex in film affects one at home. No. However, it can affect your relationship with a boyfriend!"





A woman is shown from the chest up, wearing a leopard print robe over a white bikini top. Her face is partially visible at the top of the frame.

Kate Styler (VIR-
TUAL ENCOUNTERS)
is inquisitive.
"I'm not afraid of
being typecast. I
like doing B-roles.
It'd be cool to be
typeless in a
grouped & chased
by hungry sheds."
Though she briefly
retired from
Surrender, Styler
has reunited with
the company for LOW
ENCOUNTERS and
FLESH TV. "I'm
shooting both this
season," she says.

The Sultry Sirens of Surrender Cinema

DO THEIR FILMS MERGE SEX AND SCIENCE FICTION? OR IS IT LIKE '60S
SOFTCORE?: SEX CAMOUFLAGING AS SCI-FI? THE CAST COMMENTS...

BY CRAIG REID

Surrender Cinema insists that its straight-to-video commerce is a "blend of science fiction and sex." That description is marginally valid: their product is loaded with a disproportionate surfeit of sex and only taken sci-fi visibility, the latter contrived via props (time machines, space vessels, et al).

Hybridizing sex and sci-fi was pioneered during the epoch of "nude-cuties," '60s softcore entertainment where strippers and topless dancers performed their burlesque routines between cutaway shots of male paties schlopping baggy-pants jokes. Though sci-fi was inconsequential, the genre was a catalyst for the randy environment. Sample this dialogue from *KISS ME QUICK* (1966):

Narrator: "High in the mountains of Brood-a-sia, in the secret castle retreat of Dr. Breedlove, a strange experiment is taking place. It's something so

Vanessa Turner (l., w/ Lydie Cornell) in *REBELLION* ("I identify with the character but not in a sexual manner"). Clips of her squalid scenes were included in (c) *AUDITIONS FROM BEYOND*, narrated by Brian Stinson.



strange and so terrifying that it could rock the entire world. Every master spy and secret organization are trying to steal this fantastic device—the sex machine.”

Naturally, women exposed to the apparatus—pulling, aphrodisiacal ray impulsively strip down to their thongs and proceed to dance or literally feel good about themselves.

Flash forward to 1996: Surrender Cinema reprises the “sex machine” chestnut as the premise for VIRTUAL ENCOUNTERS, their debut film. Sample some déjà vu in the following dialogue exchange.

Computer: “Welcome to Virtual Encounters. We are your gateway to pleasure. We are a personalized, private excursion into the realms of your heart’s deepest desires. A variety of scenarios have been pre-selected for your enjoyment. Virtual Encounters is a full, sensory interactive experience. You may just watch or you may actively participate. The choice is yours.”

Gorgeous, sexually repressed blonde: “God, I feel like some extra in a low-budget sci-fi movie.”

Computer: “If I did not know better, I would think that was an insult.”

Naturally, the “gorgeous, sexually repressed blonde” experiences virtual reality (a surrogate “sex machine”) and turns into a irrepresible tiger in bed with her boyfriend (who unselfishly turned her on to the technology). In lieu of strippers jiggling to jazz, the film is peddled with simulated sapphic and heterosexual couplings.

The films are crisscrossed with ingenues who are confident that exposure on film—regardless of the roles—will expand into a product reel and eventual movie stardom. It’s illusion on the cheap.

Pat Siciliano, Surrender Cinema’s head honcho, is an enigma. Alternately candid and guarded, he greets me at the entrance of Lucy Street Studios, site of EXOTIC TIME MACHINE and

PAT SICILIANO, PRODUCER

“There are a few producers who do this kind of show. They put in sex and nudity but the picture isn’t pretty. My shows do have a bit of silliness; often they’re like cartoons with naked women.”



Surrender Cinema honcho Pat Siciliano poses w/ repertory players Kim Reed, Gailin Drew & Sharna O'Shea, all of whom were cast in THE MISTRESS CLUB.

VIRTUAL ENCOUNTERS 2. With his silver hair coiffed into combed waves and a tan baked to golden perfection, Siciliano looks like some sort of compromise between a Mediterranean jet setter and Jack Casady. Flanked by silken draped sets, he invites me to sit down for Chinese and a panoramic view of scantily-dressed starlets.

“These films are among our first packages of ‘sci-fi erotica’ entertainment,” says Siciliano. “And we plan to do two films a month. It’s hectic, but there is a demand for them. We’ll finish these two, get them into past and we’ll start writing the next two on Monday and jump right into pre-production for those. We begin casting four weeks prior to each shoot. I do sci-fi erotica because I believe that sex and violence don’t really sell together, as I prefer erotica with a sci-fi twist. Humorous ‘romp’ films used to work, but not anymore.”

The question that pops to mind is how can Surrender Cinema, a cottage industry,

compete with corporate Hollywood? Is there a market for software that’s pitched as sci-fi erotica?

“Yes,” replies Siciliano with relish. “There is profit and there is quite a bit of business. We don’t get filthy rich, it’s kind of like niche marketing. It’s difficult getting financing but, by doing them for Pay-Per-View, we hope to get the rollover of that money to partly finance the next set of shows. By this looping, we can deal up the financiers. By making smaller budget films, with good production value, we can build name recognition for our Surrender Cinema trade name. We have a lot of fans, and films like VIRTUAL ENCOUNTERS, EXOTIC HOUSE OF WAX and FEMALIE have done well for us.

“I love doing this. I worked for Penthouse so I’ve got contacts for talent and that’s the key: beautiful women on screen and I have a pool of over 100 different characters I can draw from. We have our favorites and also use lots of ringers as

well as secondary and tertiary people. It’s like a crap game: fast and furious with no time to slow down. Our women are the low end of the legal age and up to 30. Some look like teeny surfer girls with a wide variety of figures to choose from.”

Call me naïve, but I ask Siciliano if he’s at all surprised that so many drop-dead gorgeous starlets are volunteering to perform nude. “Surprised? Not at all,” he exclaims. The mogul insists his ensemble of fledgling actresses are well-paid, they’re fed lines and their footage could be assembled into a demo reel.

“But once a casting agent looks at these demo reels, wouldn’t a string of sex scenes actually imperil the careers of the actresses?” I inquire.

“No,” says Siciliano. “Doing pornography would hurt their careers. But what we do is extremely softcore and it doesn’t typecast them. Ten years ago, these films could have hurt them but today we have the likes of Jenny McCarthy and Pam Anderson—and these girls have literally shown everything. Even [porn star] Ginger Lynn Allen appeared in a couple of kids’ CD-interactive games [i.e. Wing Commander 3 and Wing Commander: Prophecy]. So I don’t think it means as much as it used to.

“We’ll get 200-300 men and women casting for these films and people pop up from nowhere.” He points to a British couple and advances me to speak to them later. “These things take seven to eight days to shoot, each with a budget of less than \$200,000. If you ever gave me \$4 million to make a film, I’d make 30 small films instead of one big film.

“Our films never cross that porn line because then it’s different rules, actors, financiers—a whole different ball game. Even the same film like that develop my film won’t develop film for the hardcore people. As I said, we will never do it.”

Lunch finished, we head



Brandy Davis, a *Surrender* siren in *VIRTUAL ENCOUNTERS 2*. "I'm not a silicone queen, I am the girl-next-door."

over to the set of *VIRTUAL ENCOUNTERS 2* which is being shot concurrently with *HOTEL EXOTICA*. "Getting a bit of a head start," Siciliano reaffirms.

I'm briefly introduced to wild-eyed, Baltimore-born Sybill Richards, *Surrender*'s most prolific director.

"Hey Sybill, do you wanna be interviewed?" asks Siciliano.

"Are you kidding?," sniffs Richards, lifting an eyebrow.

Oh sure, meet you on the way down, toots.

"I am married for the second time to a beautiful wife," grins Siciliano, who waves to his son, a company accountant. "This living brings home a nice paycheck and she is understanding. I am very professional and so is the crew—we have to be. At first, my line of work upset my wife but when she saw how things were run, and what really goes on, there were no problems."

When I note that the

Surrender Sirens

BRANDY DAVIS

A CATHOLIC SCHOOLGIRL'S REFLECTIONS ON FAMILY, TYPECASTING, SILICONE & SOFTCORE.

By CRAIG REID

Wrapping-up for the day, Brandy Davis thanks me for waiting. While she is changing, I peruse through her resume. Her credits are hardly constricted by T&A obligations. In addition to roles in no less than 29 stage productions, Davis played plum parts in *MARILYN*, *BLOOD JUSTICE*, *OVERDRIVE* and *KNIGHTTIME*. Her television credits include *LET ME IN*, *PARTY ALL NIGHT* and *CLUB MTV*. A radio host for one of L.A.'s premiere AM stations, she's pitched beer in regional commercials and posed for *Playboy*.

Born in Oklahoma, Davis lived in Washington, D.C. for six months before being whisked off to Africa where her father served as a foreign diplomat. Later enrolling in an all-female Catholic collage, she transplanted herself to L.A. three years ago to pursue acting.

"So how does a Catholic schoolgirl wind up in a couple of *Surrender* films?" I ask.

"I think people who go to that sort of school eventually break out, and those rules don't apply anymore," Davis smiles. "I'm not hardcore Catholic and my parents ordained themselves as Buddhists when I was 12. It seems more and more peo-

ple don't want to be attached to a religious group. People are looking for something else, a mixture of Western religion with Eastern beliefs. I host a New Wave radio show, I'm into animal rights and have been a vegetarian for 21 years. I don't consider myself religious but I'm very spiritual and won't do things that I feel are immoral. I don't think doing simulated sex is

morally wrong so long as you're not hurting yourself, but if you want, you also have the right to do that too.

"When you get to L.A., everybody wants you to be sexy and I'm willing to be just about anything. I always thought comedy was my strong suit but I guess part of this appeal is to be innocent. They want you to be the victim and innocent, and not have a hard look, I

Brandy Davis in *VIRTUAL ENCOUNTERS 2*. "The love scene is the most sexy thing I've ever done. It's not hardcore so it's nothing to be ashamed of. But my parents won't know about it, and my boyfriend doesn't want to hear about it."





Davis & Charles Reed in PLEASURECRAFT. A SEXY CRUISER'S SHOW BOY (in just with the tennis clogs) Co-star Amber Heard reads her role "as one of three robot characters' pleasure dolls (p) made to serve men. Cute, nothing leered his."

don't look like a vixen or a silicone queen, I'm all natural. I have the girl-next-door look, a sort of woman-child if you will. As I get older, I'll get parts in films accordingly. I feel badly for those who go under the knife to get a look that someone else wants them to have; others have it done to feel beautiful or youthful. Maybe they need to work on their personality. I'm comfortable with myself. I have no inclination to try and make myself look younger. This isn't a career that goes on forever. It has to lead somewhere, otherwise it's a dead end.

"I'm not typecast yet because, after this, I'm doing a children's film. No covering, I'll be using my real name, which already sounds like a stage name anyway. I only do nudity in films if I'm the lead, and it's through this way that I can justify it. It's awkward at first because

you wonder if you look okay, then you get intimate with someone else who has no clothes on. You get over it. I want to do deeper films but I see this as part of paying the dues."

VIRTUAL ENCOUNTERS 2 is Davis' debut in a softcore film, and she assures me that she'd never acquiesce to hardcore. **ENCOUNTERS 2**, in fact, is actually a marketing play within a marketing play. The movie's characters can access a sexual VR liaison only by logging onto www.surrendercinema.com, the company's real-life website. Or as Siciliano says, "There could be horror in cross-promoting a log-on because you never know what will happen." The movie is about an innovative computer program that only one college kid is privy to. Scanning-in photos of his preferred "pin-up chicks," the randy teen's sexual fantasies are realized

on the Internet.

"I play Ginger Macaratti," says Davis. "She's a very cute, young, college girl who pays her way through college by posing for art classes. The guy she's interested in has this virtual reality program, and he has all these fantasies about me doing stuff. Like I said, I don't mind nudity but the love scene I do is the most sexy thing I've ever done. Everyone is respectful and polite and watches out for each other, but you can't help but to get wrapped up in the intimacy. Some guys get turned on, but I don't because it's film and it's all choreographed as opposed to real life where you go with your instincts."

"It's not hardcore so it's nothing to be ashamed of, but my parents won't know about it and my boyfriend doesn't want to hear about it. I understand that."



We start to discuss national heritages but a guy hawks in with his head shot and starts doing martial art moves for me. Patiently grinning, Davis relates she "has Irish blood." The guy thinks that's his cue to drop a dirty joke about an Irishman going into a bar. The actress rolls her eyes, sighs and reads the script for "the children's film." □

casts are bereft of an ethnic mix, Sciallano quickly counters with, "You know, we were just talking about that at the office. I think the real answer to you is that there are not that many of those ethnic types in this business. In the very first VIRTUAL ENCOUNTERS, we had a gorgeous Oriental girl named Tricia Yen, as I understand it, she is quite ill and no longer in the business. We tried to get a black stripper named Baroka to appear in VIRTUAL ENCOUNTERS 2, but she went to a convention in Vegas. We're trying to get more ethnics into our films but there just aren't enough willing or available for this type of film."

The central characters in Sciallano's films aren't conceptualized as sex-starved bedsinners: each film's casual indulgences are reserved, he notes, for "the specialists" whom, I overheard, earn over \$300 dollars for a few quick hours of bumping and grinding. He points to a repertory player, named Nikki Fritz, whose face is average though her anatomical assets are conspicuously voluptuous, even when concealed in a flower print dress. She's a veteran of the erotic thrillers that often crop-up on cable (SHOW-GIRL MURDERS, INDEPENDENT BEHAVIOR 2, etc.). "They are the ones with the special bodies," says Sciallano. "The principle cast have some excursions into the erotic world but it's the specialists that do the grinding dances and fun stuff; they're the ones that do it best."

Sciallano then slips into a conversation about his "latest discovery." His voice resonates with a certain awesomeness any it's the hormones talking, but it's more likely shop talk. To him, no two women look alike.

"So Pat, what kind of barometer do you apply to casting starlets?"

"Well," he posits, "she has to be appealing to my eye and when she comes to set, she has to rock. You won't

SUMMER LEADS

"I'm not uncomfortable with the sex or nudity, but it's not my favorite thing. I have no regrets. I don't want to be a waitress. I'm not distrustful here, but I've found everyone is full of shit."



Nikki Fritz, among Summer's adherents, is VIBRONICA 2000. "I love dancing, so stripper roles are comfortable. Stripperes are tough & devoid of inhibition."

believe today's discovery. Six foot tall and five feet of that is leg. The rest is beautiful blonde—and she's gorgeous! She was bought to my attention by my manager, who called up out of the blue. She's a feature dancer and wants to do film to boost her dancing career. I guess when the girls are in film, they gain notoriety so when they tour the country it means bigger business for them. So that's another reason these girls do these films, it's not just the money but to build their name and reputations."

When we heard the sound stage of VIRTUAL ENCOUNTERS 2, Sciallano asks me to perform a "hands on" cameo. "Yes, we have this shot of a girl lying nude on a bench, and you are more than welcome to lie under the bench and stroke her body with your hands. It's a dream sequence where these hands appear from the bench and caress the girl. My hands will be there!" I politely decline.

Clothed in a white, transparent negligee, Brandy

Davis floats into the camera while cooing, "You want me?" During this dry run on the final day of filming, most of the crew—excepting the director and cameraman—are preoccupied with the radio broadcast of a ball game. They've already been there, done that.

Heading to the makeup area for a rendezvous with Ms. Davis, I encounter half-naked guys sweating through sit-ups and pull-ups in preparation for a "big scene." A few of them—who were somehow enlightened to my past work as a fight choreographer—inquire about gigs in action movies. Personally, I'd be reluctant to endorse anyone who'd be hitting on the cast (I saw a lot of that). While entering an adjacent room, I'm welcomed by a long-legged Amazon in leopard-print, knee-high, six-inch stiletto heeled boots. She's squeezed into a one-piece, fishnet leotard with a neckline that drops to the navel. "Hi," she purrs. "Are you looking for me?" It's Nikki Fritz. "I did another film for Pat called EXOTIC TIME MACHINE. I played Marie An-

toinette. It's a period piece that's shot with beautiful costumes. One of our locations was a castle in Pasadena. It was eerie shooting there because the owner died on the Titanic, and now it's just rented out for film."

EXOTIC TIME MACHINE is about scientists who are dispatched to past centuries; they're supposed to be spectators to historical motivations but, accidentally dropped into the sexual liaisons of these icons, they turn into voyeurs. Sciallano assures me this film isn't related to a certain H.G. Wells novel. No kidding.

Fritz rehearses the plot as "These kids keep zapping back into different time zones like Al Capone, Aladdin, Louis the XVI. My section was Marie Antoinette who's paired-up with King Louis and Mimi the chambermaid. I had one great nude scene where, after laying the main character, I'm lying in his arms after making wild passionate love with him from time zone to time zone. It was my second film for Pat, I did BEACH BABES FROM BEYOND before this. It's my 34th film. My first film was SPRING BREAK, which I shot 10 years ago."

"Do you risk typecasting in these roles?" I inquire.

"Hell no, absolutely not," shrugs Fritz. "If you are good at what you do, you'll make it. I have absolute faith in that. I came from Florida to Hollywood for acting. My goal is to work, it doesn't matter what kind of film, who pays or where the film goes. I don't care if I'm paid \$100 or a million dollars, or if I'm the lead or a supporting role. My performance must be something that I'm giving to the project and it's about having fun. Many girls just want leads but, for me, it's anything I can do to help. Like for this film, I was called up at the last minute just to do a bunch of gratuitous sex scenes. It doesn't bother me, I thrive on it! I love doing love scenes and love being filmed nude." She coyly

shakes her head, wets her lips, strikes a pose at the door and says, "Just tell Bill [Georgel], he knows my M.O."

Back on the sound stage, Saffiano has slipped under a bench to do the hard thing he tried to drift me into. He eggs me on to join him, but I opt to follow Fritz into a rehearsal of a scene slated as "biker babe."

"Action!" calls Sybill Richards

On cue, Fritz straddles a Harley as "Bad to the Bone" reverberates from a CD player. And, suddenly, two helicopters appear from nowhere, hovering only 100 feet above the site. Since two major highways are about a mile away, it's a safe bet they're news traffic copters. Richards' direction is drowned out by the cacophony of propellers...

"Keep it up, keep the passion building," screams Richards to an obliging Fritz. "Let it build, let it build. Pull your head back. Let's start rocking guys. Beautiful, keep going. Explore it closely, slow down."

L. Bethany Lonsaine in *FORAIGEN 2*. "If I had kids, I wouldn't want 'em to do these films. I won't tell my family about 'em." B. The cast of *TIMEGATE* included genre icon Michelle Rouse

TIMEGATE: Tales of Saddle Tramps



"Many girls want the leads but I do anything to help. Like for this Surrender film, I was called up at the last minute to do a bunch of gratuitous sex scenes. I love doing love scenes & nudity."

Less pumping, more gyrating. Bring it up hit. Sexy looks, bulking up, it's close, here comes a wave...it happening."

It's definitely a show stopper. The helicopters refuse to budge, and the eyes of the security guards are locked only on Fritz's eurythmics. In the midst of this bedlam, the British couple, whom Sciallano pointed out earlier in the day, introduce themselves as Lisa and Robbo from Essex.

"We just arrived from Africa, we travel all over the world," says Lisa, who's attired in tight leopard skins. "Wherever we go, if we're low on money, we look for

jobs to make a quick buck and move on. When we got to Los Angeles, we read an ad in the L.A. Weekly, a local giveaway paper. It read, 'Looking for new talent to appear in an erotic film.' I called Pat, came to his office and he hired us. It's my first time doing this kind of thing, but the idea really excites me. I won't tell my mum about it. I was nervous, I recall shutting my eyes trying to get into it and then, when I opened them, the camera was inches from my face. Now that shocked me. But I was just making love to my boyfriend. It's all simulated, you don't actually do anything. All in all, it was interesting...and sort of fun."

Excusing himself, Sciallano invites me to meet his "latest discovery," Chrissy Styler (within one hour, her name will be abridged into Kara Styler). The small-town blonde, born and raised in the mid-West, is a combustible combination of flawless beauty and a physique that sets off fire alarms. [But before Ms. Styler would be groomed as Surrender's premiere alien, she'd suddenly vanish. If you're hooked on this cliffhanger, check-out the sidebar on page 44.]

As I bid adieu to the cast and crew, Sciallano wraps his right arm around my shoulder. "You will be coming to the set of FEMALIEN 2, won't you?" he asks.

A few months later... I reunite with Sciallano, in one of the studio offices. Seated behind a computer, he's cutting



checks with his son. Things look rosy. The company is selling enough units to pump-out sequels.

"One of our '86 releases, FEMALIEN, starred Venus Taylor as an alien named Kara," he recounts. "She comes to Earth to investigate our sexual pleasures and is so enamored with us that she decides to stay..."

"Wait a minute," I burst out. "That's also the subplot of 1964's KISS ME QUICK. This martian named Sierlock, played by a Stan Laurel impersonator Fatty Belt-buckle, is dispatched to Earth to locate 'the perfect female specimen' for breeding purposes. It was also the same premise behind MARS NEEDS WOMEN, WHAM BAM THANK YOU SPACE-

MAN and—

"In FEMALIEN 2," continues Sciallano, "another alien from Kara's planet comes to Earth searching for Kara. She goes to all the places that Kara frequents but she is followed by another couple that are alien hunters."

"Compared to the first, this one has twice the shooting days, budget, actors and leads. Taylor returns and, although she was opposed to do a love scene, we created a body worship scene for her in a massage parlor. So rather than a love scene, we did this great dance number at the Queen Mary in local drag queen bar. Things are going well, our budgets are increasing and with each film we do, we get a prettier



Veronica Tyler was cast as **FEMALIEN** (l). She performed lewd scenes with Jacqueline Lovell, (r) who last starred *Survivitor*.

"We were not there to pick each other up," says Lovell. "We are professional."



Zorrita Shauna O'Brien

THE EROTIC THRILLER DIVA IS
ELATED WITH A LOW-BUDGET-
ER'S "WELL-WRITTEN SCRIPT."

BY MITCH PERSONS

Douglas Fairbanks, Tyrone Power, George Hamilton and Antonio Banderas sensibuckled Zorro into the film medium. The late Guy Williams was heir to the mask in the a 1957-'59 TV spin-off (the theme song, warbled by the Chordettes, was a hit parade favorite in 1958). Adding curves to the crusader, Shauna O'Brien is cast as ZORRITA, a decidedly distaff Zorro.

Attired in her all-black

O'Brien as the series lead in **LADY CHATTILY**, a Magic Mirror Production, with UPM Viki Kerfoot.

trademark ensemble—hot, mask, cape, fanny-bugging slacks and leather boots—O'Brien takes a break from a photo shoot to talk about director Madison Monroe's renaissance slant on the hero.

"ZORRITA's only resemblance to past Zorro movies is that the names are similar," says the sultry sex symbol. "Where the ZORRO movies were action-adventures about this masked avenger, ZORRITA is an erotic comedy/drama about a masked seducer. The original films had a lot of action and swordplay in ZORRITA, the only time I wield a foil is when I am slashing my initial on a wall or on somebody's cheek. Madison had brought in fencing expert Scott Brick to teach me how to duel. There were two scenes shot with me slicing it out with some hoosigans but, unfortunately, they never made it into the final cut. I was a little disappointed about that.

"When ZORRITA begins, I am this naive little virgin servant girl named Bella. I go to work for two wealthy landowners, Lord and Lady Trelayne. While at the Trelayne's castle, I find this book called *The Legend of Zorrita*. The book is about a



Shauna O'Brien: 'I'd love a sequel! Zorrita puts everyone under her love spell.'

softly sadistic masked woman who gets her kicks by making uncontrolled, passionate love to people while, at the same time, putting them in a position of danger. I start reading this book, and I get so obsessed by this woman I literally become her. I put on the Zorrita costume and, pretty soon, I am seducing everyone in sight—Lord Trelayne, a tax collector, my boyfriend Paolo, everyone! And like the real Zorrita, when I am finished with each of them, I threaten them with bodily harm.

"One of my conquests is actually Lady Trelayne. She is a very frustrated woman, because her husband cheats on her constantly, and she is practically starved for sex. While she and I are making love, she admits that in addition to being on top of me, she also feels 'on top of the world,' and decides to leave her husband. When Lord Trelayne

finds out, he imprisons me with the intention of torturing me. Before anything can happen, though, the genuine Zorrita bursts in and saves my life.

"The big surprise here is that the genuine Zorrita is none other than Lady Trelayne! She had been hiding her true identity ever since she had gotten married. When she and Bella had sex, the act not only rekindled Lady Trelayne's inner strength but brought back her true self, the one that she thought was gone.

"We shot ZORRITA in just five days, but I was amazed at how good and tight everything was. The script was really well-written, the sets and costumes were excellent, the acting was really superb—especially Rick Williamson as Lord Trelayne—and to top things off, there was that dynamic twist ending." □



comers (christened by Sur-reader as "virgins"), convene on the set. Each ingenu has her own reasons for being here. Bethany Lorraine is raising money for graduate school. Debra Summers is nurturing her career in psychology. Summer Leeds is looking for something decent to edit into her demo reel. Twins, who have travelled from Yugoslavia, apparently don't speak English and haven't a clue what they're supposed to do. I've never before seen anyone from the Eastern Bloc freak out. Sprinting to the front gate, they perform an impromptu vanishing act. Poof. An actress, who preferred anonymity, related that "fear barely describes what I'm going through." She did her stuff and vowed never to return.

Bethany Lorraine, cast as an alien, informs me that her name is a pseudonym and that *FEMALIEN 2* is "my first film of this kind."

"My agent suggested it," she continues. "It's more of a safety device. I've done lots of modeling and commercials, including one for hair that just hit the airwaves, and I've appeared in country videos. When my agent sent me on this, I didn't know I was reading for the lead. It's easier that way because if you don't get something you don't expect, then it's fine. I got a callback and here I am."

"I play Xeda, part of an alien couple searching for Kari to bring her back to Altoris. We're confused with the intimacy thing and start having feelings about each other. It turns out we're brother and sister trying to reunite our family. But we fall in love and blah, blah, blah. You know what we did—

"This is the very first time I've ever done a love scene, which we performed in freezing water. We were shivering—our teeth were chattering—and it was very uncomfortable. Then you have to act happy, sexy, beautiful and like you are enjoying it. I just wanted to

PAT SICILIANO, PRODUCER

"Our films never cross into porn: it's extremely softcore, it doesn't typecast the actresses. Ten years ago it could've hurt 'em, but today Jenny McCarthy and Pam Anderson show everything."



Debra Summers (aka Summer Knight) in *FEMALIEN 2*. "I started with a bikini hot dog stand in Florida. When I got to L.A., I got into fetish work & bondage."

get it done. It was awkward because as a model, I'm used to looking into the camera and having that familiar relationship; but now I'm not looking and have to pretend it's not there. The love scene was interesting: it wasn't hardcore but romantic, and not as sexual as making love for real. But this is my limit. I won't do anything for money. You have to be careful in Hollywood, it's easy to get involved with the wrong crowd...and it is too easy to do anything for money."

"When I started modeling, I didn't expect anything. There are so many people out here doing the same thing, so I'm going to concentrate on my education. I'm attending Long Beach State, studying human behavior. It's important to educate our minds. It's easy to lose these things, es-

pecially if you become obsessed with the way you look. I hope I don't become that way when I'm older. Life's a roller coaster; that's why I'm going back to school to expand my mind. If I had kids, I wouldn't want them to do these films and I won't tell my family about it. But, when everything is done, I'd like to think that the film will be beautiful. We work hard, long hours and this is not for everyone. What's most rewarding is seeing yourself on screen. It can be surprising. What I didn't like was the guy, whom I did the love scene with, asked me out on a date. I mean, come on."

Later in the day, the cast and crew assemble at a house called The Mirage, named after a hotel in Las Vegas. Wooden sculptures of elephants, dolphins, horses and rhinos serve as support

structures for fireplaces, glass table tops and chairs. Sheepskin rugs and cushion covers add to the animal decor. The center piece of the living room is a huge apriary filled with exotic birds. The pond and waterfall outside, where Lorraine performed her love scene, look like something out of the polar bear exhibit at the St. Louis Zoo.

Adhering to the animal motif, Summer Leeds struts around the set clad in a leopard skin jumpsuit. The Texas-born starlet, who made her pilgrimage to L.A. a few years ago, admits she'd require a score card to keep track of her non-de plumes.

"I've done lots of films but this is not my main genre," says Leeds. "In this film, I play a journalist...the lead guy's girlfriend. I've one love scene and, from what I've read, it's pretty tame compared to the others in this film. I'm not uncomfortable doing nudity or the sex, but it's not my favorite thing. I'm just looking for a good five minutes for my demo reel. This is all I do—act! I don't want to be a waitress and I can pay my bills with what I do. I've done *SILK STALKINGS*, sitcoms and a lot of *Playboy*. My first film was *DARK DANCER* with Shannon Tweed. I've earned more money doing this than when I was a marketing director for a law firm. I've also got a journalism degree from the University of Texas at Austin. But this is what I do, it's my living."

"I've told my mom I've done nudity and she's like, 'Oh, I'll tell all my friends.' She doesn't realize that it shows my boobs. She's still in denial. This is the front door as I'm perfecting the back door, and making money doing what I can. I take each role seriously. People may laugh but I want to get into my character I do, and learn as much as I can—even if it's nude stuff. This gig is only paying my bills, and that's the bottom line. It's just a week and helps pay for my acting class."

"It's important to do what makes you happy and not judge people. I've a country club upbringing in Texas and got freaked out thinking, 'Oh my God, what are my parents and friends going to think?' But, you know, I'm an adult. This is my life and you need to follow your dreams—and do it now, and not in ten years when you are too old or you realize you don't like the job you're doing. I'm not distrustful here but I find everyone is full of shit."

"Especially after a big meal," I add.

"That's really funny" giggles Leeds. "I'll have to remember that one [laughs]. Am I too boring? Maybe you could spice up my interview by saying, 'You know, I got the job by going down on every man on this set.' Now that will be the quote that is taken out of context and will teach me a lesson. I need to call Ashley Judd, I know how this stuff happens now I have no regrets in life. The only regrets are the things you don't do."

I trace echoing footsteps in a winding corridor to Debra Summers, one of Siciliano's "specialists." The San Francisco-born bombshell has also been alternately

Kara (aka Chikay) Styler was cast in *VIRTUAL ENCOUNTERS 2*. "I was a stripper before doing these movies."



Surrender Sirens

KARA STYLER

THE BLONDE BOMBSHELL'S #1 GOAL IS "TO BE A SIGNIFICANT SEXPOT IN THE B-HORROR GENRE."

BY CRAIG REID

It's only minutes before she makes her movie debut. Kara Styler insists she's not nervous but her quivering body and voice suggest otherwise.

"I've been in L.A. five years and got involved in erotic dancing," she softly relates while pacing the set of *VIRTUAL ENCOUNTERS 2*. "I'm really not nervous about doing a love scene. I figure I'll just do what comes natural. I play this hard-body on a construction site. I'm young and I just want to use my assets, my looks and good body for whatever I can while I can. By using my body, I'm using my mind because I know how to work them in tandem."

She psyches herself up by flipping a CD—Donna Summers' *I Love To Love You, Baby*—into a player. "I'm a big German girl from Indiana," continues Styler. "I hope to be married with children in five years..."

Her mind wanders as she hums the music.

"Yes, using my mind by using my body. I'd love to be a big actress."

When I query if there's a transition between *Surrender* and a "big actress" role, Styler says, "I'd like to do



Kara Styler: "I don't want to be a big movie star. My goal is to be a Sirens. I like Julia Sorensen's films but I want to do my own stuff."

more speaking parts. My dream—my film aspiration—is to be topless in a graveyard and chased by a hungry zombie who's jumped out of a grave. I don't want to be a 'scream queen' those days, that's for losers who do *Camelot* crap. I want to be a significant sexpot in B-horror films. Really, how many hotties are consistently linked to the genre? I did-

n't watch horror films as a kid, it just suddenly came to me. It was either that or be a high fashion model."

She's called to the set.

"So why are you doing a softcore sex film?" I ask.

Starting at me with her big blue eyes, she falters for a second, then replies, "My boyfriend introduced me to this stuff."

Styler mechanically leaves for the sound stage like someone reluctantly but bravely approaching a firing squad.

Hours later, I rendezvous with Styler during a break. "You were right," she admits. "I was nervous but, you know, it was easy. I just did what I was told and I like it. So I'll do some stuff for Pat [Siciliano] in *HOTEL EXOTICA* and for one of his future films, *FEMALIEN 2*. I was awkward in school, never felt graceful, attractive or had a boyfriend. At 18, I decided to become a stripper hoping to find these things. During high school in Indiana, we all thought about getting out. There's not much to do. As kids, me and all my friends kept saying how we were all going to run away to California. I was the only one that got up and did it."

"I liked the kissing and

continued on page 60



"In my films, I want to be a sexpot," says Keri Styler (l). "I want to flash my tits and kick ass. But no porno ft. Styler releases as her Hawaiian turf."



VENESA TALOR

"I don't trust people in Hollywood. There's a lot of manipulation and I'm tired of playing games. I've a feeling I'm being typecast even though I'm trying to move on. I wonder if it ever ends?"

credited, in past films, as Summer Knight. "It all began with hot dogs, it's true," deadpans Summers. "I had a hot dog stand in Florida where we wore thonged bikinis. At the time, it was very newsworthy and we'd stop the traffic. I started in a dress, then shorts, then the thong. It led to a spread in *Penthouse*. When I got to L.A. five years ago, I got into everything—lots of fetish work, bondage, I've really learned a lot."

"So how did you cross over into Surrender Cinema," I inquire.

"I had a steamy affair with Pat," Summers says seductively. "No, just kidding. Is this a blackmail tape that you're making? Actually, I've been out of the modeling loop for a few years. I just got my Master's Degree in psychology. I've met so many twisted people in my line of work that I thought I could earn money and analyze them. I want to be a sexologist and work with people with fetishes and help them find ways to explore their fetishes."

"So you're saying that fetishism shouldn't be repressed but explored?" I interject (I was going to spring another KISS ME QUICK quip into the conversation, but I thought I went to that well once too often).

Summers nods. "During my two year break at school, I taught myself Internet programming and graphics. It's been actually easy to break back into the loop because it's easy playing a bimbo. I'm Kiki the Bimbo."

"Excuse me?"

Summers starts cracking up. "Kiki the Bimbo. I did a week on a show called *THE NAKED TRUTH* where I played this stripper named

Kiki [Bald Star in *Hot Oil* Fest episode]. I used to do Playboy Videos with my boyfriend but *FEMALIEN* is all new to me. I just kept laughing, especially during the missionary position where he is supposed to like push hard on me so it would make it appear like we were climaxing together. But I couldn't stop laughing. It was funny."

Unlike some of her contemporaries, she doesn't dismiss the skin trade as a repository for misogyny or male voyeurism. "It's not the sort of thing where we look at men in a hostile manner. I don't do this with any angst against the male species. I do it for fun. I'd like to add that this is my first time in *Femme Fatales*, it's very exciting and I read your magazine all the time. You treat A and B-actresses

Keri Styler & Nikki Price in *VIRTUAL ENCOUNTERS 2*. "I really think that I'm a sexual creature," notes Styler.



with equal dignity."

I had planned to wait around for Venessa Tabor, who reprises the title role, but Siciliano advises me "she'll be a no-show this afternoon. Why don't you hang out for a while?" But I hid everyone adieu. Sliding into my car seat, I slowly drive down the quiet, secluded street. Minutes later, a string of squad cars rushes by. I later found out that it was the buxom squad on their way to shut down production of *FEMALIEN 2*. Apparently, a neighbor didn't appreciate the lovemaking scenes that were shot on the location's manicured lawns. I doubt he/she was offered any visibility of the sexual bacchanal, but it's likely the moaning and heavy breathing was very audible—take after take—from behind the eight-foot fences. I'm kinda glad I passed on Siciliano's invitation to hang around. "Everyone was arrested," leaked one insider.

Epilogue

While wrapping-up this article, I was tipped-off that Venessa Tabor had declined, sans compromise, to perform nude scenes for the movie. I met with Tabor for

As *LOLITA 2000*, Jesky Lovell was "a hostess in TALES FROM THE CRYPT's Cryptkeeper—but a helluva lot cooler."

JACQUELINE LOVELL

"The Surrender movies are tits & ass. Guys watch them to jack off. Cool. But it became a pain in the ass for hardly any money. I'll never get residuals & they get shit loads of money."



Jacqueline Lovell encouraged in films made by parent company Full Moon, including *NEEDLES*. "I had a nude scene in that, but I did wear a garter mask."

lunch in Studio City, a hamlet for actors who are sweating out their big break. She pretty much squashed the rumor. "I don't have as big a part in *FEMALIEN 2* as I did in the first," she said. "Mainly, I'm in this dream sequence. I initially spoke to Pat and asked what is the story about the love scene. He said, 'With the money we're paying you, we will have to get our money's worth.' The reviews for *FEMALIEN* were good and I bonded with Kara. I don't mind doing nudity but I'm trying to do less. I identify with Kara, not in a sexual manner but with her curiosity and adventure. What made this movie worthwhile for me was that part of the deal of *FEMALIEN 2* was I'd do nudity and a massage scene—but, in return, Pat would include a striptease scene where I'd sing a song that I composed. I want to do music, and this was important for me because I used to be a burlesque performer and that art has dwindled away—it's dismissed as some sort of an-

tiquity, and I have nowhere to choreograph it but film.

"I see lots of people in the business but hope to find a special someone who's not in the industry. I'm from a small town, and there's part of me that would like to settle down and lead a normal life; but there's also a part of me that likes the glamour, that's why I moved to L.A. Now I must deal with my duality. I don't trust many people in Hollywood. Many of them promise things and I'm still waiting. I just want a nice person in my life. I have nice people in my life, but there's a lot of manipulation that you have to deal with and it becomes a pain game...and I'm getting tired of playing games. I've a feeling I'm being typecast even though I'm trying to move out of it. I get offered the same roles but turn them down. But you can't just stop because you realize, all the time, what you have already put in to it. I wonder if it ever ends?"

Finally, there was one more rumor to reaffirm or recant: I also heard that

Jacqueline Lovell, Surrender's premiere player (what with *LOLITA 2000*, *VIRTUAL ENCOUNTERS*, *EXOTIC HOUSE OF WAX*, *FEMALIEN*, etc.), had not only flatly rejected *FEMALIEN 2* but was prepping her resignation from the company.

"Yes, I've left Surrender," related Lovell. "I left after I hosted their video, *GIRLS OF SURRENDER CINE-MA*. It's just all the girl-girl hush comes from all the past Surrender movies edited into one tape. Surrender was the first to hire and trust me, but now I've grown out of it. I love them and they're like so cool, but I just don't want to do things that aren't per diem and I want more quality. I've been spoiled with bigger film budgets and I don't want to go back down the ladder.

"It was a good parting. I like their movies it's just that I had to fight for my money, and I'd hear from other actors they were getting more money because they had agents and I didn't. I felt like I was being taken advantage of so they could get away with paying me shit to get lots of nudity. I told them how much I wanted, but they wouldn't pay and I said 'Fine!' But it was cool working on the films and I always had a great time.

"I did learn a lot and now I'm applying that experience to bigger films. I mean for Surrender, it was one or two takes and six days of shooting. In big films, you get more takes but, when you knock it out in one or two takes, they're impressed. I'm not typecast and, actually, I was never planning to be an actress. I was a model in men's magazines and just sort of fell into acting.

"I'm not looking to make a ton of money, or I would have been a feature dancer or stripper. Come on for Christ's sake, I did the magazines and videos! Surrender is like Penthouse video. I'm not doing these now because I'm sick and tired of it, I've already done so



before, 'It's like a religion'—it's whatever works for you. I don't think any one person can tell you that you should act one way or this way. You need to find what it is that makes it work for you. I also believe that if something is in you, you can learn to act, but if it's not in you, or you're not born with it, then you won't reach that point that we all want to reach.

"I believe in karma and what you give out comes back, and I try to treat people the way I want to be treated. I also try to basically be a good person, and although sometimes it may go against you—especially in Hollywood, where it seems people love to screw you, both figuratively and literally—I still like to help other people out. I also believe in controlling my own fate and destiny, and I've got the talent to be successful here and it's important to surround yourself with good people. And finally, as long as you can wake up everyday and be happy with yourself, that is what counts for me. And I am happy." □

FORNITA R: Morgan Daniel surrenders to Sherron O'Brien. Back at the ranch, Jesse Coleman applies fan-dubbed experience to Nancy O'Brien (R).



Diary of Lust

Pat Siciliano, head of Gothic Erotica Films—a division of Surrender Cinema—is sitting in his producer's chair high atop a mountain overlooking the vast city of Calabasas, California. He is solemnly gazing at the property which surrounds a massive stone estate, the central shooting location of Gothic Erotica's opus, *DIARY OF LUST*.

"This place is fantastic, isn't it?" says the handsome, pearly-toothed filmmaker. "Do you know that the owner of this house built it stone by stone, from the ground up? He's originally from Massachusetts and I guess he was a bit homesick, so he made this place to resemble one of those sturdy, New England-style barmes. He and his wife furnished it themselves in different styles. There are Renaissance beds, heavy wooden settees, fixtures from the 1920's, intricate, brocaded drapes.

"The eclectic decor fits right into the general tone of *DIARY OF LUST*. It's a simple story about a woman who is selling her home, so she hires a realtor who brings three clients into the house. While the clients are exploring the place, the realtor reads from a diary she has found, and the clients get transferred, via their imaginations, to three different periods in history, the 1500's, the 1700's, and 1917. While in this dreamlike state, the clients act out the

IT'S ABOUT FEMMES, FANTASY, TIME TRAVEL, TEASING, PERIOD COSTUMES AND CLEAVAGE.

BY MITCH PERSONS



Julie Krull: "I'm having a lot of fun with my roles in *DIARY OF LUST*. I play the queen and I also play Dr. Carol Sharp, who's a healer & psychic investigator."

erotic adventures that are in the diary.

"What I like about doing movies like these is that they are not merely your typical soft porn films. They are also costume dramas. That mixture of the erotic and the historical has gotten to be sort of a trademark of Surrender Cinema. A lot of research goes into each project; wardrobe and settings have to be correct for the time period in which the story is taking place. Another feature I'm producing, *ZORRITA*—which is a take-off on the Zorro legend, this time with a female lead—has costumes that are indicative of 19th-century California.

"I have one person and one person only to thank for the accuracy of the garb our actors wear, and that is Lynn Rose, our costume designer. She works practically by herself, and has come up with some stunning, original ideas, yet at the same time has never lost that feel of authenticity."

"I delve a lot into books on costumes," says Rose a few minutes later, "and a lot of what you see on screen is actual vintage clothing. For the 1500's segment, there were two royal guards that had to appear in the scene, as well as a wench and a poet. The two guards' costumes are direct copies from a history book, while the outfits of the wench and the poet, although based on sketches in the same book, were embellished with a few touches of my own, things

"A girl and I were on a banquet table for a love scene. I saw a container of Chinese food & said, 'I hope my rump does not wind up in the almond chicken.'"

like jabots, gloves, belts, accessories that were not really necessary but contemporary and flashy-looking.

"What does happen sometimes is that no matter how authentic a costume may look, the director doesn't like it because it doesn't look sexy enough or doesn't have the right feel. I'm always aware of this, so when I am out shopping for costumes, as I sometimes have to do, I find myself looking for things that are pleasing

Michelle Turner (L), who plays dual roles in the film (R), notes, "I play a boy, a Matt Hott type of heavy taste and, uh, yes, I get to make love a lot."





Julie Kneel poses for photos Linda Tordella: "When I was a little girl, I loved to play pretend. When *DIARY OF LUST* came along for me, I just took those years of making believe I was somebody else and incorporated them into both my roles."

to look at and, usually, if I find the dresses—and they are accessorized nicely, and they look good on the girls—the costumes end up looking sexy anyway. We were fortunate that the period of the 1700's, the 1680's really, was a period of low necklines to begin with. Lots of bosom showing. For the 1917 part of *DIARY OF LUST*, we have clinging flapper dresses—very stylish, very erotic—and then, of course, for all the eras, there are robes, and lingerie that the women wear in between, for when they're getting undressed and getting ready for lovemaking.

"Designing lingerie can sometimes be tricky, especially in eras when undergarments were very unlike the kind we wear today, like in the 16th-century. To a 16th-century man, watching his lady love step out of her pantaloons may have been very erotic, but when those billowy, clumsy leggings are

looked at today, they appear very modest and almost silly. It takes quite a bit of work to maintain the general design of undergarments like that, and yet come up with something that modern audiences are going to find titillating. It can be a lot of work, but I think the end result is quite satisfying. And to be quite honest, I don't think the average viewing public is going to be too upset by gross inaccuracies in costumes and undergarments. I think mostly what they will be interested in is how the people look with their clothes off."

Michelle Turner, a willowy blonde, is dressed to kill as an 18th-century wench. "I'm also in the 1917 section, and, naturally, in the modern section," says the actress. "The 1917 segment is really kind of fun because I get to play a spy, like a Mata Hari kind of femme fatale. The scene takes place toward the end

of World War I. I wear this slinky flapper dress, and have a gun tucked in my garter belt, and I even get to poison somebody with a pill slipped in a cocktail. And, oh yes, I get to make love a lot."

She's not the only one. Another love scene being slated for this afternoon is a liaison between a haughty-looking queen (Julia Kress)

"These movies are not typical soft porn. They're also costume dramas. That mixture of the erotic and the historical has turned into Surrender Cinema's trademark."

of some unnamed country and a hunky nobleman (Chris Johnson) who, for some reason, keeps his identity camouflaged behind a mask. Director Madison Monroe conceals the the unbridled passion behind a closed set, but offers *Femme Fatales* staffers the opportunity to observe the initial, steamy encounter between both lovers.

The couple are introduced by a comely servant girl (Mia Zottell) who then makes a discreet exit. The queen, dressed in nothing but a low-cut corset which reveals her well-toned cleavage and long, shapely legs, takes a long, slow walk around the disguised nobleman, looking him over as if he were 180 pounds of the rarest brie. She then commands him to remove his jerkin, which he does. The woman reclines seductively on the queen-sized bed and entices her bare-chested boyfriend to join her. There is almost complete silence

Julie Kneel, with Mia, as a medieval outcast. "My modern character proves that a house harnesses hidden power from past ages of sexual episodes."



Diary of Lust

CAROLINE KEY JOHNSON

DOIN' THE HOLLYWOOD SHUFFLE: "I DID THE NOTORIOUS LESBIAN DANCING/KISSING SCENE WITH BOBBIE PHILLIPS IN 'SHOWGIRLS.'"

BY MITCH PERSONS

She could be the poster girl for Washington state apples. With her sunny disposition, Caroline Key Johnson physically embodies the all-American icon. Neither tall nor short, the actress' hair is flax-colored, and her skin glistens with the hue of fresh buttermilk. Her turned-up nose is lightly dotted with freckles, and the grin is infectious. She's gregarious and affable but Johnson's "Aw, shucks," frush-off-the-farm persona starts to erode once she addresses you with a cornhusk dry voice and a candid, non-provincial demeanor.

"I've had this voice since I was six years old," she resonates in a tone that's somewhere between a soft growl and a purr, pulsing deep within her supple body, her timbre can kindle a man's fire from his toes to his scalp. "I think that sometimes, as far as this business and acting are concerned, I look young and wholesome enough to play an ingenue part; but then I'll start talking and a producer will say, 'No, no, no. She can't play the little teenager or the cheerleader.' I'm not like the squeaky, spunky type. I always get the sluts and the strippers, and the been-around-the-block things."

"Because my voice is a certain way, and I'm also a dancer, people put two and two together and they im-



Caroline Key Johnson (aka Cara Kopy) and Tiffany Granath shuffled through BOBCAT'S 883 ADD SHOW. "We played the Wing Ding Dancers. I was Ding."

mediately put me in a topless club. I did that notorious lesbian dancing/kissing scene with Bobbie Phillips in *SHOWGIRLS*. And sometimes they put me in a bar, which is kind of ironic since, in real life, I don't drink at all.

"I lived in New York for seven years, where I did a lot of recurring roles on dif-

ferent soaps. I also did commercials, voiceovers and all that, then moved to L.A. in 1992, where all the stripper, bar-sit, mode-cutie parts for me began. I don't think nudity in itself is any big deal because, after all, I am a dancer and very much into my body. Also, as long as I am wearing those public patches—those little Band-

Aid things you have to wear to cover your privates—I'm fine, completely uninhibited. I guess that's because those patches aren't very sexy. You're kind of like a Barbie doll, no pubic hair showing. I've often said that if a director and a crew really wants to get into the film they're making, they should drop their pants around their ankles and put on one of those patches. Then they will know exactly how it feels.

"I'm joking now but there was one director I worked with, on the very first skin flick that I did, who could have benefited from that experience. He had never done this kind of genre before and actually, at that point in my career, neither had I. I was totally nude except for the patch, thank God, and here I was, strutting some guy I'd met five minutes before and my direction was saying, 'Go for it.' I was told I was going to be getting all this direction, things would be very mapped out and specific, and I wouldn't have to think of anything. I would be told, 'Now, you're kneeling down his leg, you're kissing his thigh, you're nibbling his ankle...' But what was my direction? 'Go for it,' which meant, 'Do your thing.' It was horrible. It was really bad."

"That movie...it was one love scene after another, I had to strip, I had to fuddle



Caroline Key Johnson poses for Linda Tinkens. "Because my voice is a certain way, & I'm also a dancer, people put 2+2 together and put me in a leotard class. I always get the skirts & the strippers and the been-around-the block type roles."

and make love with people of both sexes. When it was over, I was just about ready for the Laughing Academy. I went and cut all my hair off, told my hairdresser to make me look like a boy, because I didn't want to be feminine.

"Having my hair cut short was an extreme measure, because I found out afterward that not all directors were like this guy. Most of them are pretty sensitive to an actor's needs. Madison Monroe, who is directing *DIARY OF LUST*, is like that, she's just fantastic. In the film, I play the part of Larissa, who is sort of a crazy businesswoman who comes out to this home to buy it, and ends up having sex with pretty much everyone in the place. Then I play a character back in the 1500's, who is a prison guard. And then I play an undercover agent for the English army in a 1917 segment. I don't change all that much. First I'm in a blonde wig, then a black one, but you can see it's me all the way through. Yesterday, I was in almost every scene, cutting back from the 1900's to the present day, then I did a love scene in the 1940's and a love scene in the present day. It's a good

thing I'm schizophranic [laughs].

"I had a ball with this one section. I had to be with a guy and a girl on a banquet table, and then just a girl on the same banquet table, and then another girl on the same banquet table. During one of those love scenes, this girl and I were lying on the table and we were all sweaty and heated up, and I looked down and noticed there was a half-empty container of Chinese food at one end. I thought, 'I hope I

don't end up with my rump in the almond chicken.'"

"Even with films that promise to be pretty good, doing sex scenes can get boring so—like with the Chinese food—my mind comes up with these non-sequiter things that keep my interest up. Some of them are pretty funny.

"I love being funny. Even when I'm bent over a chair and taking it from behind, I keep saying to myself, 'But I'm really funny.' I was on a show where I got a chance

"[I] was totally nude & here I was straddling some guy I met five minutes before, and my only direction was 'Go for it,' which meant 'Do your thing.' It was horrible."

to show my comic side. It was a cable show that was called *BOBCAT'S BIG ASS SHOW*, and was hosted by Bobcat Goldthwait. It was a game/variety show on the FX Fox Cable that aired Monday through Friday at one o'clock in the morning. A friend of mine, Tiffany Granath, was my partner. We played two characters called the Wing Ding Dancers. Tiffany was Wing, and I was Ding. She and I wrote the opening sketches, and we also did the choreography. We did a lot of ugly dancing, which was really quite funny.

"To anyone who doesn't know what ugly dancing is, it's dancing that is stupid and sometimes ugly. It's sort of like...[she shuffles into a lunatic funky chicken routine]...chicken to the right, snap, chicken to the left, snap, swirl it, swirl it, or 'bad moonwalk, bad moonwalk.' You know, things like that.

"After *BIG ASS*, Tiffany and I auditioned for a cable call-in telephone sex show, *NIGHT CALLS*. They hired her and didn't pick me, which I think was a good thing. On *NIGHT CALLS* you have to be really, really uninhibited because you're not doing a character. For instance, guys call in and they will say, 'Let me talk to Tiffany,' and then they play with themselves while she eggs them on. Tiffany didn't seem to have a problem with that, so she did just fine. Me, I went back into this genre type of thing and you know something? I'm doing just fine, too." □

Johnson R., Tiffany Granath and Bobcat Goldthwait on *BOBCAT'S BIG ASS SHOW*. "Tiffany and I wrote the opening sketches & did lots of ugly dancing."



as the nobleman climbs onto the satin sheets and lays down next to his lady. The only discernable noise is the heavy breathing of male crew members, who have locked their collective focus on Ms. Krus.

After the director calls 'Cut!' Krus strolls into the backyard, seats herself in a lawn chair and munches on a quick lunch of kuppas maki and rice. Exorcising herself from her alter ego, she punctures the ego that her character had inflated like a Macy's Thanksgiving Day balloon. Genuinely amicable, the actress appears to be elated with the work.

"Like everyone else in this film, I play more than one role," says Krus between bites of the cucumber-and-seaweed delicacy. "I play the queen but I also play the realtor, Dr. Carol Sharp, who is not only a businesswoman but sort of a psychic investigator—one who is doing research experiments on past-life regression. What she is trying to do is prove to herself that the place has hidden powers from sexual episodes that have happened all throughout the past ages. So she is showing the prospective buyers the house because the owner, who is anonymous at the moment, wants the home to go to someone who will appreciate it, someone who is, well, sexual. So Sharp is trying to get these people to feel something and, at the same time, trying to prove to herself that what the diary says is actually true. She reads from the diary and from her readings she propels her clients back into the past.

"I'm having a lot of fun with my roles on this film, and I've been told that I am not doing too bad on acting job, either. People have asked me, on more than one occasion, how can I play a smoozy queen and an uptight businesswoman so convincingly, like what kind of preparation do I go through?"

"Actually, there was very little preparation. When I



Julia Krus chronicles a *DIARY OF LUST*. B. Schneider's wardrobe supervisor, Lynn Rose: "What sometimes happens is that no matter how authentic a costume may look, the director doesn't like it because it doesn't look sexy enough!"

was a little girl, I used to love to play pretend. I was always going off and being a female Robin Hood or a Princess Leia, or some kind of regal personality. When *DIARY OF LUST* came along for me, I just took these years of making believe I was somebody else and incorporated them into my roles as the queen and



Dr. Sharp. It didn't hurt that I was getting into character by virtue of two very wonderful makeup artists, Michele Lewis and Christine Beyer, and a phenomenal costume designer, Lynn Rose.

"And, once I had my makeup put on and stepped into my costume, I just continued to play pretend." □

Dani Leon Barbie Babe

YOU MAY REMEMBER THIS CURVY COMEDienne AS ONE OF THE "NUDIST COLONY OF THE DEAD" OR AS A CYBERSPACE SIREN.

By ANTHONY P. MONTESANO

Watching Dani Leon on stage is like watching a Barbie doll come to life. She's pert, blonde, doe-eyed and bouncy. The classic girl-next-door image. But then something happens you just didn't expect: a joke about oral sex pops out of her mouth. Then another. It



opens a floodgate of sex-oriented jokes. This innocent girl-next-door isn't so innocent after all. All of a sudden, the Barbie doll persona is peppered with a bit of spice and you're wondering what's going to come next.

Take, for example, *My New Soap*, a poem composed by Leon that faces certain rejection from *Reader's Digest*.



Dani Leon: "The writer of this article described me as a Barbie doll. Marvel eyes applied a prosthetic eye for that resemblance. I was hired to play Barbie at this year's Toy Fair." A: She's one of the Nudist Colony of the Dead (stage version).

"Can't wait to take a shower and try out my new soap."

It's long and hard and slippery.

And hangs from a big rope.

Showers used to bare me. Get in—get clean—get out. But that's before I realized what my new soap's all about.

It takes to play Hide and Go Seek for hours in the tub. Hey, where's my new soap on a rope? All I see is a stub.

It's that combination of wit and coquettish playfulness that Leon has hybridized in her stage/film performances and multimedia projects. And she's modeled as the embodiment of adult comic strip character Tanya Tantee, a buxom blonde explorer who—like southern belle Daisy Mae—seems unaware of her overwhelming sex appeal. Leon exudes the same blend of chastity and playful lustiness.

"Dani Leon is an original," says cartoonist Mike Kroffel, who conceptualized Tanya Tantee for his testosterone website. "I've met a lot of ladies, but never one with her combination of looks, intelligence, humor, spontaneity and sex appeal."



"Embodying this beautiful blonde from a comic strip, whom everyone wants to literally eat, makes me feel just absolutely delicious."

"All of Tanya's escapades involve escapes from evil villains who attempt to dine on her," continues Kreffeld. "The story line is very campy, with some violence, but no bloodshed or harm done to Tanya. She always outwits her pursuers and escapes unharmed, but not without some loss of clothing. I had originally con-

L: "Sex appeal is something that comes from within. You don't have to be beautiful to be sexy, but I believe you just have to feel sexy in order to show it." R: Costar as Tanya Tate



"Many tried to dissuade me from acting. If you got a dream, I think it's better to try a lifetime and fail rather than giving up and never knowing."

ceived Tanya as having light brown hair and being taller. But after seeing Dani's photos, I knew immediately that her blonde good looks and pixie charm were the right fit. Tanya became blonde and five feet tall, and she also acquired an amazing and charming personality: one half sex kitten, the other half armed with a

"I love sleazy scary, stupid films, the ones where you're once-told what to laugh or scream like *DAY & DAWN OF THE DEAD*. I love John Carpenter's *THE THING*." (E) As Tanya Torsen (Photos by Duane Peleco).



quick wit and sizzling repartee. I really enjoy working with Dani. She thinks of herself as a cartoon character and, once I saw her attractive features and wide range of expressions, I knew that she was the only choice to be Tanya."

Leon offers her abridged

summarization of all the gushing: "Playing a beautiful blonde, whom everyone literally wants to eat, makes me feel just absolutely delicious!"

For a while, Leon had bounced back and forth from New York to Los Angeles but her biocoastal odyssey

has concluded with an indefinite tenure back east. While in Hollywood, she sharpened her comic stand-up routines and landed bit parts in low-budget fare like *TURN OF THE BLADE*, an erotic thriller spawned from *FATAL ATTRACTION*. Her good looks induced Leon to



deal with industry personnel who were more interested in her body than her acting talent.

"I believe every woman has been pressured unprofessionally one time or another," says Leon. "I turned down the lead in a B-movie because they added a show-

er scene to it. It wasn't the nudity that turned me off the project, there was partial nudity written-in already. I didn't have a problem with that. It was the fact that it was written-in after I agreed to play the part. I felt it was a cheap way to get some more T&A

in the film, and that made the whole movie look completely cheesy I'd rather not get typecast that way."

Leon sustains a tolerance for on-screen nudity "as long as it's appropriate. In retrospect, I have never done nudity for a role but, then again, I've never been of-

fered a role substantive enough to persuade me to take off my clothes. Most comedies don't require nudity. Personally, I prefer to make people laugh; if I get naked and they laugh, that's not quite what I'm looking for in a career."

As Ivory Snow in Mark

"In Mark Pirro's Nudist Colony of the Dead, I played a 17-year-old Catholic virgin from the South. Now if that's not acting, I don't know what is."

Pirro's **COLOR BLINDED**, Leon was required to play a black woman who's spirited, via a magic potion, into a white body. The movie chronicles the contretemps of Melanie (Luella Hill), a beautiful black woman who's developed a six month relationship with a white man. When the cynicism of best

B. "By the time you read this, Tanya Tacton will finally be making a splash in a screenplay," says Leon. "Tanya is a great idea but she just didn't have enough momentum to keep going."



friend Tana (Verda Bridges) turns infectious—is there any longevity to an interracial partnership?—Melanie wishes that she could be sure that Dave really loves her. The next morning, Melanie wakes up, looks in the bathroom mirror and screams (photo, far right); she has transformed into a beautiful, blonde caucasian (Leon).

"Dani is a joy to work with," says Pirro, whose low budget *A POLISH VAMPIRE IN BURBANK* (1983) is regarded as a camp classic. "I met Dani Leon about five or six years ago at a party thrown by a mutual friend. I was instantly struck by her sense of humor and her energy. She's very professional, knows her lines, hits her marks and complains less than any actress I've ever worked with. She's a real trooper and will go above and beyond the call of duty."

"Dani wasn't the original choice for the lead in *COLOR BLINDED*. The original actress became a bit of a problem after about two days of shooting, so I made the decision to fire her. I immediately called Dani and asked if she wanted the lead role. [Leon was originally cast in a smaller role]. She agreed and gave the film a quality we could have never matched with the other actresses."

Leon acknowledges that she requires "a lot of silent time, with no distractions, to prepare for a role. Even a radio in the background can be annoying. I try to think like the character and, if there isn't enough research to work with, I make up some that would correlate with her actions. For example, the character of Ivory Snow in *COLOR BLINDED* is kind of an *Alice in Wonderland* type. She's confused of who she is. Of course, once she thinks she finds herself, she



T: I've scored many lucky women growing up. Carol Burnett, Glode Redner, Goldie Hawn, Bette Midler. The one who influenced me the most is my mom.
R: In *COLOR BLINDED*, the absurd, rape-influenced spin on *WATERMELON MAN*

become a self-centered snob. I drew on my 'inner bitch' for that one."

Pirro recounts casting Leon in *Nudeist Colony of the Dead*, a stage adaptation of his 1991 cult comedy. "Dani proved to me that she had a natural ability to endear herself to anyone. Our show ran

in Hollywood for about five months and it was Dani who made it a pleasure to do. Without her, I don't think the show would have run as long as it did. I know I wouldn't have enjoyed it as much."

The admiration is mutual. "I love Mark's work," says Leon. "I found it a

pleasure to be in something he created, since his sense of humor is very similar to mine. In all fairness, I did have to audition for all the roles linked to each of his productions. In case you're wondering, we have always and only been friends, no couch casting here. In *Nudeist Colony of the Dead*, I played this 17-year-old Catholic virgin from the South. If that's not acting, I don't know what it is. It was a cross between *Little Shop of Horrors* and *Rocky Horror Picture Show*. Every night, we would play pranks on the actors who occupied the stage. The jokes were between the members of the cast; we never let the audience in on it. The object was to keep it going without breaking character."

"I've always liked being the center of attention. I was the lead in every play as a child and later, as an adult, I always sought out the spotlight. But no one's going to discover you sitting on a barstool in an ice cream shop. When I said I wanted to act, many people tried to discourage me because it's such a tough career choice. I think it's sad for a person to not



try. If you have a goal or a dream, I think it's better to try a lifetime and fail rather than to give up and never know. Laughter makes people happy and feel good about themselves, and if you can bring a smile to someone's face, it's a beautiful thing." □

KARA STYLER

continued from page 41
teaching stuff and I think that I am really a sexual creature. But I don't think I will do porn...right now."

"How about in the future?"
I ask.

She pauses then mutters, "Hard to tell."

Styler starts to talk about her adolescence and her breast augmentation at age 18. But an assistant barks, "Return to set."

Epilogue: She never made *FEMALIN 2*. Styler just vanished. No forwarding address. It turned out that she uploaded her boyfriend, kissed her career goodbye and resurfaced in Honolulu, Hawaii. The starlet seemed quite content to catch some rays, develop her own franchise and operate a web site (www.karastylar.com). But the ties to her former employer seem to be hindering. I received the following e-mail on January 17th, 2000:

Alaska I look a lot healthier now, it must be the sunshine. I'm back with Surrender again. I just secured a two-month deal and I'll be posing for a few covers. Call you in a couple of days. Kara

KATE TOWNE

continued from page 40
a woman, played by Michelle Pfeiffer, who has been married for quite some time, 20 years or so, to a college professor played by Harrison Ford. The wife is sort of a home-maker and has a family. The film starts with Michelle's daughter, played by me, going off to college and Michelle is freaking out a little bit about that because the two of them have been really close. And then Michelle starts to see things around the house, kind of a ghost-like presence, and little, odd things happen that lead her to believe that she's losing her mind in essence, you wonder if she is really losing her mind or if these things are really going on.

"Working with Michelle and Harrison was a trip. Michelle is a doll and Harrison, he's really nice but he's also much warmer than you'd think—but in a good way. He's kooky and off-the-wall and a little childish...and not really stoic, the way he appears in the Indiana Jones movies. He's really cool."

"In *SOMETHING LIKE BENEATH*, I appear to be a



Kara Styler is christened "the new Fel Berrington." A suggestion to Surrender: How about casting Styler in a sequel to Ms. Berrington's *GREY OF THE DEAD?*

normal girl. There I am a blonde. If you look at my earlier, meaner roles, I'm dark-haired. I dyed my hair blonde because I didn't want to play any more nasty girls and villains. For some reason, producers see someone with dark hair, light skin and eyes—like me!—and they immediately think 'bad girl.' A lot of times, if you're ten feet tall—or if you're Mexican or Spanish, or some kind of descent and dark-haired—you have less options, almost. Not only is

the dark-haired girl a villain usually, but she also gets cast as the leading lady's best friend: so when I wasn't playing a villain, I was that best friend. I wanted to try something different.

"Being a blonde helped me succeed beyond my dreams. Starting this spring, I will be starring in a comedy series called *M. Y. O. B* [Mind Your Own Business]. It's a mid-season replacement about a teenage girl who goes in search of her birth mother

and finds, instead, a snobby aunt. It's being written and produced by Dan Ross, the same man who was responsible for *THE OPPOSITE OF SEX*, and it promises to be a real winner." □

KIM MURPHY

continued from page 41
was in *PARTY OF FIVE* and *I, A, DOCTORS*. I also just completed an episode of *SNOWPS*. My most famous commercial is that *STAR WARS* Pizza Hut, Taco Bell and KFC combo. We used the actual set of *STAR WARS* and I play the Pizza Hut girl, and we're all traveling through space fighting droids and promoting food. That one ran last summer. I made alright financially on that one, which is a good thing because, right now, I'm not involved in anything.

"This is kind of a wonderful life, except for things like this—you know, not knowing where your next assignment may be. Otherwise, it's so incredible to be able to travel and then have so much time off before your next job. Just incredible."

Between assignments, Murphy is active as "a dancer. I just finished a bellydance/fusion show, which is bellydance fused with all other kinds of ethnic dance. I did African, Brazilian samba. Then I also do traditional dance, jazz, ballet. I ice skate. And I am a contortionist. I do this act called Honey and Vermilion with another girl, Marn Johnson. They're circus-type contortions, something of a freak show, actually. We do our act all over the place. Our most recent gig was at the Viper Room in L.A. Park. We wear these long, sort of luxurious Bettie Page-type wigs, and we do a lot of *Soul Train* moves but we pretend that we don't know what we're doing: it comes off as funny, broad comedy. There are also straight hits. I'll balance in a contortion on Marco—she's in incredible shape—and then come out of it. Then we do a routine called *The Tractor* where I do a handstand onto her, and then we flip over together and roll off the stage.

"You have a lot of unique talents," I noted.

"Yes," she concurred, "and I've even managed to keep some of them to myself."

Then we talked a lot about South Carolina. □

LETTERS

BLAIR PROJECT (8/8)

I've been a rapid fan of Linda Blair ever since my parents prohibited me from seeing *THE EXORCIST*. Thanks for her most candid interview to date. Linda's behind-the-scenes dope on *EXORCIST* II finally clarified why this sequel's pretensions turned it from horror to hokum. Pretty much the same thing applied to Stanley Kubrick's sterile adaptation of *THE SHINING*. I much, much prefer Mick Garris' TV miniseries of *THE SHINING*, which was audited Stephen King. Anyone who thinks Kubrick is a genius should be submitted to a screening of *HARRY LYNDON* and denied any opportunity to walk out. Ancient assassins like Roger Ebert and Leonard Maltin trendily find sadomasochistic relief in pleasuring themselves with Kubrick (the public knows better, in spite of the expensive hype, *EYES WIDE SHUT* died without dignity at the boxoffice). Ebert is the penultimate ass-burrower; if Spike Lee had made *PLAN 9 FROM OUTER SPACE*, Ebert would have deemed it "a Cold War masterpiece that's historically aligned with classics like *DR. STRANGELOVE*."

Mary Wemal
Bethlehem, NH

Wow! Linda Blair's astute recollection of her movies was no Candydyeon (*HEAT HEAT* and *CHAINED HEAT* almost ruined my career!). She has every right to be pissed, what with *CHAINED HEAT* producers cutting out critical scenes in pre-production, and *EXORCIST* II horrors screening up the film during production. But Linda is a survivor. I saw her in a N.Y. revival of *Grease* when she performed without those liabilities (i.e. without bad management or slick producers leaning up her act). She was fantastic! The audience loved her.

Johnny Coleman
San Ramon, CA

Thanks for a very consummate interview with Linda Blair. But neither Ms. Blair, nor the interviewer, brought up her unimpeachable worst-on-prison movie. She shot one

day of footage for a film dropped on the American video market as *SAVAGE ISLAND*; actually, Linda's scenes were inserted into a dubbed European movie called *FEMMINE INFERNALI* (*GORINO: PRISON OF SEX*). First & last time director Nicholas Bessardly filmed Linda's wraparound scenes for the U.S. edit. Apparently, the movie is lost, which is probably the best news for Blair since being cast in *THE EXORCIST*.

Jim "Kace-it-Ali" Rouse
Manlius, NY

TAAFFE

I've had a taste for Taaffe O'Connell (8-4) ever since the delectable bombshell was served-up to a hungry, 30-ft. maggot in *GALAXY OF TERROR* (stripped out of uniform, fangled and eaten, think of Vargha directing the "Lobsters" scene in *MULTIPLE MANIACS*—with a nude, blonde hotty instead of Divine—and you'll have a pretty good idea of the whole thing). I read in *FF* 8:1 that Taaffe was cast in a 1959 movie called *ASHES TO ASHES*: will the film be released this year? And which is her favorite *SIMPSONS* episode?

KAC Anderson
Boulder, CO

O'Connell replies: "That maggot scene was nothing compared to an Indian ritual which involved my personal participation. While researching *RAENIE & TWIGG*, a series I've developed about two femmes fatales who investigate the paranormal, I was actually half-swallowed up by a 20-ft. lion on camera! It's documented on my web site (www.taaffefilms.com)."

"There are still scenes to be added to *ASHES TO ASHES*. There have been creative differences between investors but we're moving forward. I play this sexy anti-hero's guarding the gates of hell. My #1 favorite *SIMPSONS* episode is Treehouse of Horror VIII."

"FIRST WAVE" FEMMES

The interviews with the "Sexy Ashes of *FIRST WAVE*" (8:11)



Girls & girls: Taaffe O'Connell, with the gendered delicacy of exorcists and sex pots who have a taste for beautiful forms.

were engaging (the premise of the series—films exploiting our sexual vulnerability—is like a colossus between Terry Southern, Milo Manara and Nigel Kneale. I love it!). I'm wild about Jan Deen's front cover photography of Brandy Ledford, the femme fatale from outer space.

Bill Curtis
Washington, D.C.

[Not long after our *FIRST WAVE* issue debated on newsstands, Ms. Ledford was cast in a recurrent role on *BAYWATCH HAWAII*.]

LATIN HEAT WAVE

... Could you offer any information about the breathtakingly beautiful actress who recurrently played "Dolores" on the syndicated *RENEGADE* series?

Joe & Carrie Rose
Virginia Beach, VA

[Her name is Angélica Alendare, whom *FF* photographed Linda Tynes has described as "the Latin Cindy Crawford." The young thespian's 2000 releases include *SIX GUN WOMAN* ("I was photographed for the film's poster

last January!") and *NAKED FIREPOWER*. Between print assignments (e.g. posing for Baywatch Babes & Heavenly Hapnais calendars), Alendare is performing in Doctor Robert Davis' *DOOMSDAY*. She'll be profiled in *FF* this year.]

FAN CLUBS

Send self-addressed and stamped envelopes, if you wish a reply.

Sara Barrett (8:10)
www.sarahbarrett.com

Danica Duff (8:2)
www.danicaduff.com

Mamie Van Doren (8:8)
www.mamievandoren.com

Roxanne Michaels (7:13)
e-mail: roxmich@msn.com

Jill McWhirter (7:11) e-mail: jillmcmwhirter@shotmail.com

Taaffe O'Connell (8:4)
www.taaffefilms.com

Samantha Phillips (p. 5)
www.samphilips.com

Ingrid Pitt (1:5 & 6:1)
www.pittsofhorror.com

Stacy Rosman (7:16)
www.lovestacy.com

Kara Styker (7:6)
www.karastyker.com

Laurie Wallace (page 7)
www.lauriewallace.com

CLASSIFIED ADS

Reach thousands of avid Female Fandom fans with your ad. Classified ads in this space are \$0.75 per word, caps \$0.25, 6000 total word, bold-caps \$0.50, extra per word. Display space is available at \$40.00 per month, with no minimum ads. 75 ads are possible in advance. Send your inquiries to CPG, P.O. Box 270, Oak Park, IL 60303.

CARTMAN COMICS Just inside Book 'em! Comics: Mike To Book 'em, P.O. Box 501, 2nd Fl. Daily, Ph: 1002, 1-208-674-350-0147

WWW.MEGAREP.COM Visit our beautiful Discoveries. Blood melt. Sex acts. Cuckles. Girls' stories. & more! Horror video reviews. Free newsletter!

UNATHEFTVISED 1000 members! ultra-entertainment files and featured huge! ultra-low price! for advertising, high-end-potential, send us your ad! Call: 416, Ph: 514, 427-1414, Ontario, Ph: 528-8814

